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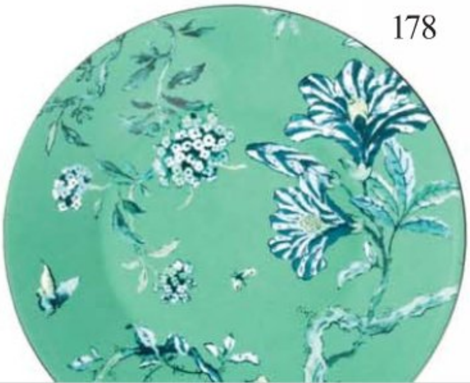

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Editor Kate Coughlan at home.

LEFT Kate Coughlan's "nephew" McDuff – read his letter to Kate on our website. **BELOW** Make time to shop for precious metal on page 40.

from the editor

I HAVE A FRIEND who loves her bed so much it is a challenge to prise her out of it. She is *NZ House & Garden* style editor Tracey Strange, a creature of comfort indeed. She is a sometimes-reluctant member of our fitness group, which trains year-in year-out, wet or fine, at seven o'clock on a Saturday morning. It is my job to collect Tracey on my way to the Auckland Domain, so most Saturday mornings at 6.45 I wait outside her house, wondering if she is going to make it or if the lure of her deliciously comfortable bed will win. I can hardly blame her as her bedroom is just as you would imagine it from her work for *NZ House & Garden*.

The cover of this issue was shot in the kitchen of her house, with its feminine petticoat table and pretty shades of lilac. Our aim was to evoke a sense of simple but warm comforts. The pleasure of seeing the sun shining through a window, the colour of a bowl of flowers… they're easy to enjoy and they're not hard to create either.

I am pleased to read on page 124 that quilts are back. When the duvet revolution swept through the nation's bedrooms, we busy bed-makers sighed with relief. No more hospital corners, no more weighty tonnage of blankets to be woman-handled into a tidy shape at the corner of the bed. All we had to do was tuck the sheets out of sight and fling a duvet over the lot. Voila!

However, it is my grandmother's light-as-air quilts in all-over florals that live with me as a gold standard of comfort. Waking under those floating islands of warmth was one of my childhood's great treats. Each morning my grandfather brought her a cup of tea with a non-salted, lightly buttered snack biscuit in bed. That courtesy was extended to grandchildren staying for the holidays. It seemed an amazing thing to us as, whenever we were woken by our parents, it was to be told to get out of bed and go to school.

It is interesting to see how much lilac has infused this issue – what a shame we can't scent the pages as easily as we can colour them: our office would smell of lavender. Even my shirt is the right colour. Some of this we do deliberately (such as section headings) but in other places it just crops up all by itself. Sometimes it seems as though the universe helps us along with the creation of this magazine.

I knew there was more than the universe at work this week when I received an email from McDuff, my sister Rosemarie's dog, about whom I wrote in last month's editorial. I'd asked McDuff if he'd email me a digital photograph of himself and the letter was a pleasant surprise. There's not enough room to publish his email here but you'll find it (along with the link to receive our e-newsletter) on our website, nzhouseandgarden.co.nz.

Kate

ON THE COVER Chairs from Le Forge; lilac velvet cushion from Mid Century Design; tablecloths and floral fabric from Siena; teapot and jug from May Time Marketing; lamp and curtains from CC Interiors; flowers and vase from Vida Flores; other accessories stylist's own.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: BELINDA MERRIE; BELINDA'S ASSISTANT: WENDY BOWN; STYLING: TRACEY STRANGE; KATE'S PHOTOGRAPH: MARK SMITH

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NATIO

NATURAL AUSTRALIAN BEAUTY

NZ HOUSE & GARDEN

introducing

Melanie Jenkins
Photographer

After years of study and assisting other photographers, Melanie Jenkins set up her own business, Flash Studios, in central Auckland 10 years ago. On any given day she can now be found shooting interiors, jewellery, fashion and food. Recently, along with our own food stylist, Jo Wilcox, she photographed a cookbook, *Pure Indulgence,* for charitable organisations the Stellar Trust and the East Auckland Rotary. Being surrounded by like-minded creative people is the best part of her job for Melanie. Her "wonderfully supportive" husband of 10 years, Luke, is constantly roped into building quirky sets or scouting inorganic collections for props. Together they encourage their three-year-old son Levi in his early photographic endeavours, including this portrait of Melanie, taken on holiday in Tonga. Her work on Gatherings can be seen on page 136.

Tracey Ellin
Art director

When Tracey Ellin started at *NZ House & Garden* in 1998, she was fuelling a lifelong obsession with interiors magazines that started at age 10, when she dreamed of being a fashion designer. "I'm passionate about good design and quality workmanship. Unfortunately, I'm always falling in love with something from our shopping pages." Tracey collects old portable typewriters and vintage fabrics, loves sewing, cooking and ironing and would make a perfect wife in exchange for a ring from Sutcliffe Jewellers. "My dream day would be spent in bed with a tin of home-made cakes and a mountain of beautiful books." Tracey shares her 1950s cottage with her West Highland terrier, Lucie, her ocicat, Angus, and hundreds of books on design. Though her two 20-something sons have left home, they can often be found examining the contents of her fridge.

Adrienne Rewi
Writer

During her 40-year career, Adrienne Rewi has worked as a newspaper journalist, a full-time artist, a freelance writer and a photographer. Along the way she's also managed to squeeze in marriage (and divorce), motherhood and plenty of travel. When not indulging her love of bookbinding or organising her next trip, Adrienne is based in Christchurch, writing for New Zealand and international magazines. She's the author of six editions of travel guide *Frommer's New Zealand* and has published three other non-fiction titles and assorted short stories. "All of that gives me the perfect excuse for never attending to the renovating project that is my decrepit 1920s bungalow. I keep hoping one of my three sons might feel sorry for me and take on the task, but I don't think it's going to happen." Adrienne's story *After Monet* is on page 104.

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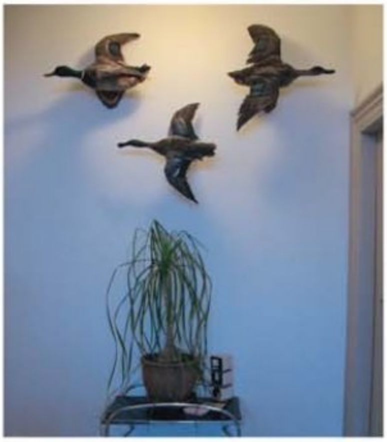


JUST OUR DUCKS

I thought you might like this picture of the ducks in our hallway. They've been part of the family for years, ever since my husband Adrian called me at lunchtime one day and said, "I've bought something. Come and see." I ran through the possibilities in my mind. A new car? Unlikely. A new wetsuit for him? Quite likely, but he'd hardly sound so mischievous. So I met him in town, my curiosity at cat-killing level, and he took me to the David N White Gallery, which has a wonderful collection of curiosities and memorabilia. A scruffy cardboard box was produced and I looked inside. What does one say when faced with three stuffed ducks, mounted on slices of varnished tree trunk, complete with labels specifying the place and date of dispatch? The 1972 spoonbill is a drake from Waiuku, the mallard came from Karioi in the same year and there's a 1973 grey duck. I was thrilled! We took them home and the kids shrieked, "Gross, dead animals!" then named them Beaky, Little Bill and Graham. I rather like the way Graham is flying in the opposite direction to the others. He reminds me of me.

Fifi Colston, Wellington

Sally's reply: Anyone else got a prized possession with a story behind it? Send your pictures and stories to sally.duggan@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

talk back

YEAH, RIGHT ON!

It was wonderful to read your article *True Brew* (Tastings, July issue) and see the old Tui Brewery getting the attention it deserves. My family has been farming at Mangatainoka for more than 90 years – my great-grandfather was a local accountant here and apparently was the auditor for the Tui Brewery. The family story goes that he was presented with Tui Brewery silvery trays, on which he used to serve drinks, but his teetotaller daughter (my grandmother) dumped them. Over the years I have dug up many old empty Tui beer bottles on our farm, including the green Tui much prized by bottle collectors. I am also fortunate enough to enjoy a few of the full bottles. Nothing beats Tui beer!

Keith Harris, Mangatainoka

ALL FLUFF AND FLAVOUR

Just got my *NZ House & Garden* email newsletter (July) in which editor Kate Coughlan asks whether poppy seeds have any flavour. Years ago I had a Hungarian mother-in-law who taught me how to cook the most wonderful sweets and pastries. It was a Hungarian tradition to bake poppy seed rolls (beigli) at Easter and Christmas. The poppy seeds are ground in a special grinder and fluff up like ground nuts. You make a paste of them with milk and sugar, spread it on the dough, then roll it up and bake it. When you grind the poppy seeds, you can definitely taste their unique flavour.

Maria Bickley, Takaka

Sally's note: Find Maria's recipe for beigli on our website, nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

BACHING IT

I loved reading your August email newsletter extolling the comforts of home. I couldn't agree more! We sold our house at the beginning of the recession and decided to settle ourselves in our basic family bach just south of Kaikoura while we built a new home. The bach is uninsulated, has a temperamental septic tank and one tiny living room, a bunk room, a bedroom and a farmhouse kitchen with a log burner. Mousetraps are needed around the place. But this gem of an abode has taught us so much about living simply, frugally and without stress. We make our own bread, enjoy woodworking, grow veges, take long and thoughtful walks on the deserted beach and have learned how to play mah jong (thanks to lovely locals). Never have we been bored or stressed. We have lived off the smell of an oily rag and enjoyed every minute. I hope that when we move back to town and our new retirement townhouse we can continue to remember that the loveliest moments in our lives are spent in our own homes with the people we love.

Sandra Greig, Gore Bay

PS You don't need a bach to do this!

GARDEN INSPIRATION

How refreshing to read your Cuttings page (July) and learn about Housing New Zealand's gardening competition for its tenants. In a world of so much bad news, it was great to hear of a government department implementing an idea that promotes health and sustainability and celebrates inspiration and hard work.

Sandra Johnson, Richmond

TOUGH EGGS

We had a most unusual visitor last week to our garden bird bath. Some little person had transferred some golf balls (my husband leaves them handy for his chipping practice) from the garden to the bird bath. A young harrier hawk, or kahu, spotting them from above, must have thought them an easy, tasty morning tea. It spent some considerable time picking them up and dropping them, thinking they were eggs that would break, I guess. Quite humorous from the kitchen several metres away.

Jenny Atkins, Bay of Islands

GETTING WITH THE PROGRAMME

I was touched by the Down to Earth story (July) about the work of the Garden to Table Trust, which helps school children to plant, grow, harvest, prepare and share food. I was given a small plot in my father's vege garden at a very young age and have been hooked on gardening ever since. The programme will help children develop self-confidence and self-worth.

Pauline Smith, Napier

SHELVED!

Like most of your readers, I have subscribed to *NZ House & Garden* for many years. I love the back-to-back homes we are now seeing each month: the quaint and quirky, the grand and gracious, the modern and minimal. Having already passed on a number of my mags, I am again running out of room to store them. Solution: a purpose-built unit. My first issue is number 30, February 1997. Each square of shelving holds about 35 issues, so there's plenty of space for a few years yet.

Kim Cleverton, Napier.

PS I note that, of the nine letters to the editor in the July issue, four were from Napier. We are obviously a very stylish lot in this neck of the woods.

Sally's note: Three more from Napier this issue.

HOME WINS – FOR NOW

Your August email editorial weighing up home comforts against overseas travel was timely. I confess to sometimes feeling discontented when I can't afford to travel. Then I remind myself that being at home is very satisfying – particularly on a cold winter's night, warm and cosy with a glass of red wine and a good meal. My husband and I have (I think) decided to forgo a holiday this year and have the interior of our house repainted instead. That, I know, will bring many years of satisfaction.

Dallas Maze, North Shore City

You can subscribe to our monthly email newsletter by going to nzhouseandgarden.co.nz and clicking on Register/Update.

DREAMS ON ICE

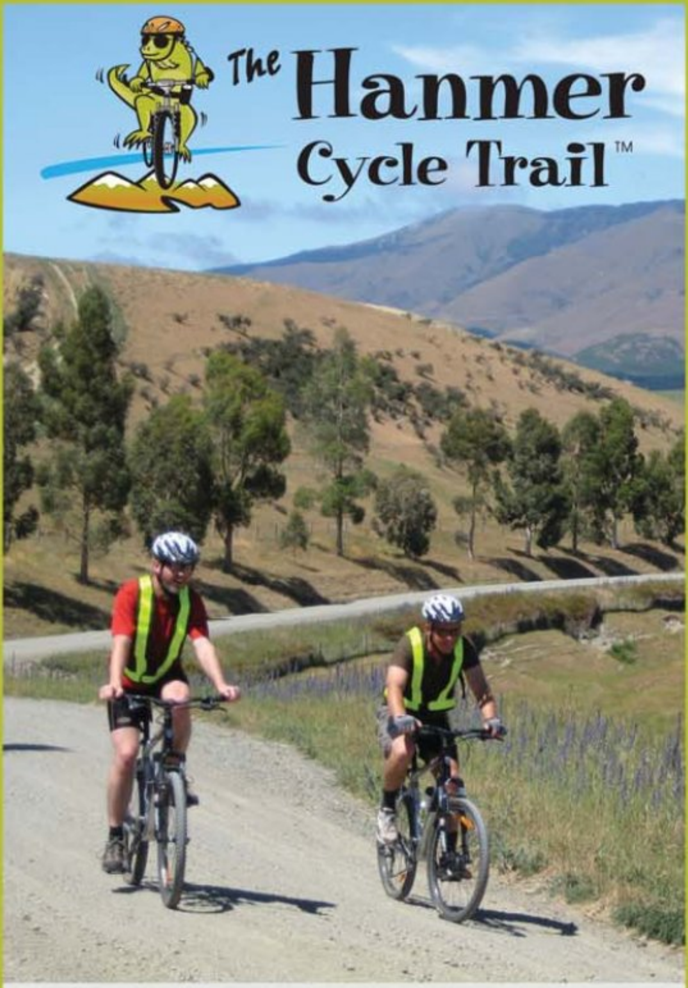
I am not yet a home owner, but I love flicking through your magazine. The beautiful houses you feature have helped me build my vision of my dream home. I have even sketched it on paper and have it up on the fridge, waiting for my deposit to be saved. I know for sure I want to have a huge backyard, as I love landscaping and garden design. I want to commend you for giving people like me something to look forward to.

B Jones, Hawke's Bay

SOUL OCCUPANT

Five years ago our family bought a lifestyle block and an unfinished house of macrocarpa and earth bricks in the bush near Waipu Cove. At the end of our first year there my husband was diagnosed with cancer, so we decided not to worry about finishing the house and spent the next few years doing things we enjoyed. Then, two years ago, my husband passed away and my children began to leave home. Now on my own, I have toyed with the idea of selling and moving into town, closer to my work and the shops, but I've stayed put, unable to start the selling process. I was unsure what was behind my reluctance until I read your *Southern Charmer* story (July) about Andrew Simms' Dunedin house. He said, "You do have to live somewhere your soul feels comfortable". I love it here, even though I sometimes feel like a middle-aged hippie. I listen to the tui, quails, rosella and fantails conversing during the day and at night the moreporks in deep discussion, and my soul is comforted.

Raewyn Walker, Waipu Cove >



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AN AUSSIE BEAUTY...

I had to laugh when my partner and I recently visited my sister Pauline on the Gold Coast and she had a copy of your *NZ House & Garden* mag on her coffee table. Her homey and characterful house made me feel like I was back in New Zealand on the farm, it was so rustic and beautiful. The grounds were incredible and she and her partner had put so many hours into making it their dream house. She adores your mag. Isn't it great to know your work is enjoyed by people so far away?

P E Diack, Napier

...AN AUSSIE BATTLER

I am moved to tears at the damage our 10-year drought has done to the beloved cottage-style garden surrounding my small Melbourne townhouse. Now we are making plans to keep only the most hardy and beloved plants and trees, laying river pebbles everywhere else in an effort to create a "survivor" garden. I don't think anyone in New Zealand has any idea of what a real drought can do. I'm one of the lucky ones. I didn't lose everything, as so many people living in the high country did, so I'm grateful that I can continue to rescue my own little patch of earth. I'm grateful, too, for the monthly arrival of your magazine, which is such a morale booster in my little corner of the world. After living in Australia for nearly 50 years I can say, without a doubt, that *NZ House & Garden* is the best periodical of its class I have seen and I am so proud of it!

Bronwen Phillips, Melbourne

We welcome your feedback: email sally.duggan@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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Very Versailles

Tucked away in suburban Hastings is a bijou home in the grand French tradition

WORDS JESMA MAGILL / **PHOTOGRAPHS** ANNELIESE HOUGH

THIS PAGE In Deb and Mark Bell's Hastings salon, a bookshelf made by Mark and finished by Deb houses books, treasures and a widescreen TV, concealed behind the double doors. **OPPOSITE** Deb's creativity is very much on display.

THIS PAGE Deb designed and made the mauve 'Modern Princess' ensemble on the mannequin. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) Deb upholsters all her furniture herself and always opts for striking colour combinations. Flowers feature in the upholstery patterns and the plates on the wall. Crystals, pearls, silver and glass objects of all kinds are favourites.

THIS PAGE Roses are a recurring theme in Deb's design work; this painting is entitled *Mary Rose*; the old table, bought from a local antiques store, once graced the art room at Hastings Boys' High. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) The couch was rescued 29 years ago from a friend's verandah. Pink, black and white is a favourite colour combination. The kitchen cabinet, complete with chicken wire, was made by Mark for Deb's birthday.

Deb and Mark Bell's first impressions of their Hastings home more than three years ago weren't good. But, on closer inspection, Deb's artistic eye detected possibilities for renovation; Mark remained underwhelmed.

The L-shaped weatherboard structure, built in the 1950s, was an architecture-free zone with some questionable additions thrown in over time. The 100sqm space comprised three small bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen and an L-shaped open-plan living area.

"The lounge had low ceilings, decorative beams and hard-board walls," recalls Mark. "And part of the roof had been removed with a clear corrugated panel installed in its place."

Luckily Deb could see past all that. Her experience as an interior, landscape and clothes designer, jewellery manufacturer, artist and chef helped her to visualise the property's hidden potential. "I knew we could create something special here," she says. "The way the light came into the rooms looked ideal for my painting and the building was as solid as a rock. Its plainness was a big attraction too."

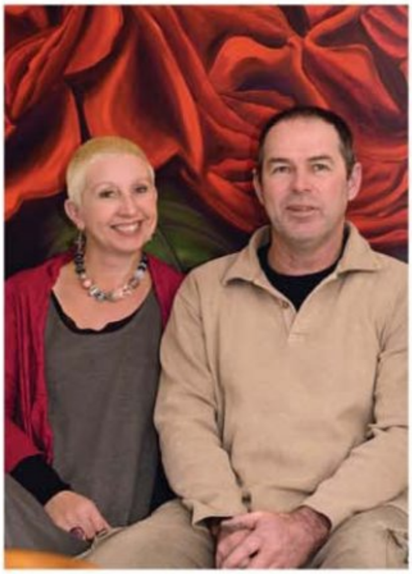
Devoid of detail and features that would compete with her vision, the place was ripe for Deb's style of personal enhancement and Mark knew to trust her instincts when it came to creating special places. The couple had already successfully completed two substantial renovations – an old villa and a beach bach in Hawke's Bay. >

THIS PAGE Deb made the headboard from collected architectural pieces; the chandelier was bought from a garden centre and embellished. The original fireplace in the salon-cum-library was refurbished using 19 different shades of grey to get the right effect. **OPPOSITE** The Bells' dog, Molly, appreciates comfort and has the run of the house; Deb painted the floral frieze over the door.

The couple meant business. The day they moved into the home they later named La Maison des Portes – the house of doors – a superfluous wall in the lounge came down, even before the beds were made. A few months later the low ceilings, hardboard walls and clear roof panel were banished and five extra sets of French doors installed.

Reconfiguring the existing footprint allowed for two generous bedrooms, an extra loo and enlarged living spaces, including a lounge, dining area and salon-cum-library. Though these spaces are open they feel intimate, with the zones differentiated by clever design, furnishings and furniture placement.

The fact that the couple's sons, Harley, 29, and Josh, 23, had both left home eliminated the pressure of accommodating four adults in a compact space. "We were initially tempted to increase the living area by extending the back of the house and adding a huge deck. >



THIS PAGE (clockwise from above) The house is at its best under the sparkling light from chandeliers and candles; the clock was found in an antiques store in Australia. Deb and Mark Bell.
BELOW A humble exterior belies the sumptuous decor within.

"But, apart from the expense and hard work involved, we felt by adding something we'd lose something as well. Now we can stand in one place in the lounge and see into most of the other rooms and we love that," says Deb.

Tight budgets are well known for inspiring innovation and, though the Bells' transformation references the French chateau style, their budget wasn't at all grand. The most striking and ornate pieces – the vivid green bookshelf, oversized mirrors, fire surround and bedroom suites – all look three centuries old but are in fact much younger. They were mostly plain and functional second-hand finds given new life with paint finishes and timber mouldings from the local hardware store.

"As we renovated, we were conscious of building spaces to display the things we love. We don't understand the meanness of minimalism," says Deb. "We both have a lot of interests and like to be surrounded by proof of their existence. We don't even mind the occasional mess about the place."

La Maison des Portes sparkles with reflected light from the chandeliers in every room. They look expensive, but they are mostly lighting chain store purchases individualised by Deb.

Reflecting the theme of the home, the large garden is laid out in formal European style. There's a knot garden in buxus and lonicera with an urn atop a central pillar, topiary in quirky shapes, a secret garden encircled by four brick pillars also bearing urns, dozens of rose bushes, a potager and a fruit orchard.

Now that all the hard work has been done, the pair take great pleasure in their home. Mark loves to wander around the garden in the early morning with his daily espresso and Molly, the fox terrier. Deb's favourite time is spent in the living room with its view of the garden, watching the low winter sunlight paint the walls as it reflects off the coloured chandeliers.

Time will tell whether the Bells heed the siren call of serial renovation and move on to other challenges. Mark has already floated the idea of swapping the property for a house on Coochiemudlo, a tiny island off the coast of south-east Queensland. He knows his wife may take a little convincing. For starters, she'd miss all the entertaining.

"It's like a train station here sometimes," says Deb. "We have dinner parties, coffee mornings and afternoon teas. We all fit around the small dining table and guests help themselves to food from the butler's tray nearby.

"Often people invite themselves over simply because they want their fix of the house."

See more of this house at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz ■

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Zebra crossing

THIS PAGE The glass doors in Lyndsey Harrison and Robert Leslie's Bendigo home slide back to take in the views. **OPPOSITE** The view from the house looks across the head of Lake Dunstan to the Mount Pisa Range.

A couple of American wine lovers have taken up residence in pinot country, adding an antipodean twist to their distinctive Zebra label

WORDS LYNNE WALKER / **PHOTOGRAPHS** SUELLEN BOAG

OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS there have been startling changes in the Lake Dunstan area of Central Otago. A wine revolution has taken place and the once dry and brown Bendigo ranges, towering along the eastern side of the lake, are now covered in verdant stripes of grapevine.

Above the vines, a long, low, reflective structure can be seen winking across the valley. It is, in fact, not one but two houses; built of glass and local schist, they hug the hillside, at one with their surroundings. They belong to former New Zealander Lyndsey Harrison and her American husband Robert Leslie, owners of the Zebra NZ Vineyards that surround them.

Born and raised in Christchurch, Lyndsey was 12 when she moved with her family to California, where her father worked for the US merchant navy. After a brief return to New Zealand for nursing training, Lyndsey worked in different jobs in the US before buying a vineyard in California's renowned Napa Valley with her first husband, Michael.

Fifteen years later Harrison Vineyards was one of the Napa's most acclaimed family-run vineyards, producing premium cabernet. Its original label featured a mythical beast created by Michael, combining a zebra and a Tang-dynasty horse.

Some time after Michael's sudden death from a heart attack, Lyndsey met and married New York businessman Robert Leslie and together they began searching for another place to grow grapes – this time pinot noir. >

THIS PAGE Dining chairs covered in grey pigskin surround a 19th century French table found in Queenstown; the deer antler chandelier came from Martinborough. **OPPOSITE** The galley kitchen is Lyndsey's favourite room. *Little Bird*, a bronze statue usually referred to as "Robert's rooster", presides over the secluded courtyard behind the house; it's the work of Colombian sculptor Fernando Botero. Polished concrete slabs poured on site make easy-care benchtops.

THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) Matai floors and recycled timber ceiling beams in the living room. The New Zealand version of the Zebra label incorporates koru designs. Part of Lyndsey's zebra collection. The fireplace took two stonemasons many months to build. **OPPOSITE** Local schist was used for the huge back-to-back fireplaces.

A former colleague from the Napa, by then making wine in the Gibbston Valley area around Queenstown, persuaded them to look at the Bendigo site.

"We didn't know we wanted to be here until we came up on the mountain," says Robert. "How can you beat this when it comes to views? Everything changes all year round."

Lyndsey and Robert had never built a house before but they knew they wanted something as unobtrusive and as natural as possible. They started by building and living in the smaller of the two houses, now used as accommodation for visiting friends and associates from the wine industry or rented out as a guest lodge. Ideas that worked well were transferred into the second house. Both were designed, in close consultation with Christchurch-based C Nott Architects, to take advantage of the view.

Huge beams, matai timber floors and local schist – on exterior walls and two magnificent back-to-back fireplaces – are features of the generously proportioned main house. Sliding glass walls open up to take advantage of the superb views across to Wanaka, up to the Lindis Pass and down to Lake Dunstan.

Transporting the building materials must have been a nightmare. "The truckers in this country are amazing when you consider the size of the timber beams and the sheets of glass that had to come up," says Robert. "They have no fear."

To finish and furnish the house, Lyndsey chose earthy shades of grey, beige and brown. >

Container loads of treasured furnishings and artworks were shipped over from the US including, of course, plenty of zebras, which can be found throughout the house.

"There's nothing in the house we'd change," says Lyndsey. "I wake up in the morning and see views all though the house and I see Robert just standing, looking and looking."

For the garden, the couple engaged a local landscape architect, Sue Mort. Starting with a bulldozed site, she landscaped the front garden to blend seamlessly into the natural landscape. A secluded courtyard garden behind the house, sheltered by huge wooden doors, harbours vegetables, fruit trees, natives and exotics, including Lyndsey's "favourite thing" – roses.

As for the vineyard, now incorporating Maori motifs in its label design, it produced a one-off vintage in 2006. But Lyndsey has since decided she doesn't want to spend six months on the road selling wine internationally and a local winemaker, Craggy Range, is now taking all their grapes for their ultra-premium single-vineyard wine programme. The Craggy Range Pinot Noir Zebra Vineyard 2007 took five stars in the November 2008 *Cuisine* magazine pinot tasting – "incredibly exciting," says Lyndsey.

Since the Napa vineyard was sold, Lyndsey and Robert have been living in San Francisco when they are not at Bendigo.

"We come over every other month or so to keep an eye on things and we love being here. This life is completely different from city life in San Francisco, where I go to the opera, the symphony and the ballet."

Adds Robert, "It's a great rural life." ■

THESE PAGES (clockwise from top left) The house's huge macrocarpa beams have weathered to a silvery sheen, blending with the landscape. The view from the grass-roofed garage across the courtyard and the Lindis Pass. Looking south towards Lake Dunstan, with Lyndsey's favourite rose bed on the right; the tussock on the roof helps merge the house and landscape. Bathing is almost an outdoor experience. All doors from the main bedroom slide back to maximise views up the Tarras Valley to the Lindis.

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Dome shaped and light reflecting, glass bell jars and cloches are not only pretty but pretty useful. Cloches were originally devised to protect fledgling plants from the winter chill and frost, but they've now been hijacked and taken indoors to be used as whimsical coveralls for everything from food and flowers to favourite objects. Silver ball **oil lamp** $65 and Le Klint **candlestick** $325 (at right) from Design Denmark, (09) 361 3333; large **cloche** $74 from The Bay Tree of Remuera, (09) 522 2991; glass **vase** $49.90, small **dome** with stand $95 and bird **candleholder** $39, all from Republic Home, (09) 361 1137; linen sheet (used as a **tablecloth**) $650 from Siena Home, (09) 377 7555; white ribbed vase stylist's own.

Ringing true

Capture the essence of spring with a glass bell jar

STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPH** BELINDA MERRIE

Patterned silver. Blue and silver Jazz Collection **wallpaper** by Wallquest available through Decortex e Famiglia, (09) 303 3545; Tse Tse confetti **plate** $83 from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490; silver vase stylist's own.

Etched in silver. Etched **vase** $119 from Republic Home, (09) 361 1137.

High style. Brushed silver **horse head** $209 from Country Theme, (09) 522 2626.

Let there be light. Eight-cup **candelabra** $550, for stockists contact French Country Collections, (09) 376 6440.

Beauty with a twist. Christian Tortu **vase** $515 from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490.

Soft touch. Society **cushion** $97 from Cocoa, (09) 379 7100.

Precious metal

Glamour comes easy with gorgeous, gleaming silver

STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BELINDA MERRIE

High glamour. Six-drawer **dresser** $2390 from Harrowset Hall, (09) 524 4452.

Classic timepiece. Wall **clock** $258 from Smith & Caughey's, (09) 377 4770.

Burnished light. Glass **candleholder** $76 from Baku, (03) 544 2290.

Contemporary beauty. Alessi **bowl** $305 from Askew, (09) 378 1414.

Fine dining. Silver **food cover** $499 (with plate) from Republic Home, (09) 361 1137.

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Retro lace. Doily **place mat** $30 from Living & Giving, 0800 548 464.

Out of the box. Box-framed sea fern **artwork** $499 from Republic Home, (09) 361 1137.

Airy light. Coco Catkins **lamp** $869, for stockists contact May Time Marketing, (09) 526 4274.

Feminine flowers. Bowl-shaped **vase** $85.80 from Smith & Caughey's, (09) 377 4770.

Light as lace

Lacy-looking objects add a modern touch to your home

STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BELINDA MERRIE

Sweet dreams. Frette **pillowcase** $794 from Cavit & Co, (09) 358 3771.

Lattice work. Ashanti **frame** $101 from Akali, (09) 300 9409.

Best-dressed dish. Glass salad **plate** $29.95 for stockists contact May Time Marketing, (09) 526 4274.

Delicately lit. Delphine **lamp** $450, for stockists contact Capulet, (09) 300 9404.

Looks like summer. Water **glass** $59 for six from Republic Home, (09) 361 1137.

Classic curves. Vase $105.50, for stockists contact May Time Marketing, (09) 526 4274.

Baby soft. Lacy **blanket** $399 from Republic Home, (09) 361 1137.

Soft as lace. Frette **cushion** $605 from Cavit & Co, (09) 358 3771.

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We love...
the elegant and pretty Whitewell Carrington collection from Designers Guild, for stockists contact Icon Textiles, (09) 302 1652.

THREE OF THE BEST... *side tables*

CLASSIC
Polished aluminium table $510 from Mango Interiors, (06) 304 7999.

CONTEMPORARY
Nickel and glass side table $720, for stockists contact CC Interiors, (09) 589 1950.

DECORATIVE
Galvanised iron plated/nickel table $2399 from Corso De' Fiori, (09) 307 9166.

Home front

Our style editor shares news and views from the home stores

"Design is a sensory experience, but also one of form and function. I like contemporary furniture to sit alongside antiques, beautiful, tactile fabrics and accessories – treasures to be enjoyed every day"

– HILARY SKINNER, INTERIOR DESIGNER

Add a little reflective glamour to your home with this silver **lamp** and **shade** $669, for stockists contact Capulet, (09) 300 9404.

Cute Tse Tse salt and pepper **shakers**, $53.80 each, add whimsy and fun to any table; available from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490.

MIRROR MIRROR
This beautiful Egeso mirror painted with wildflowers, $6790, was designed by William Bertocco and Vittorio Locatelli for Italian contemporary furniture company Driade, available from Indice, (09) 376 9167.

PHOTOGRAPHS: BELINDA MERRIE

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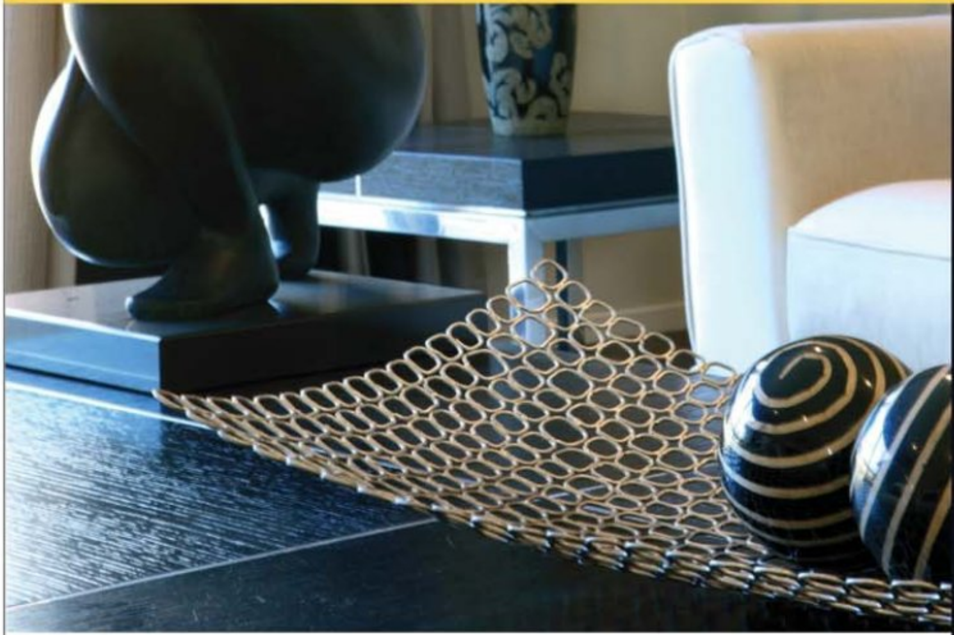

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Softly does it

Texture plays a huge part in any well-dressed room

WORDS & STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPH** BELINDA MERRIE

PRINTED TEXTURE Embroidered silk adds a charming, homely touch to a family sofa. **Cushion** covered in Cetec's Drabery silk, available through Decortex e Famiglia, (09) 303 3545.

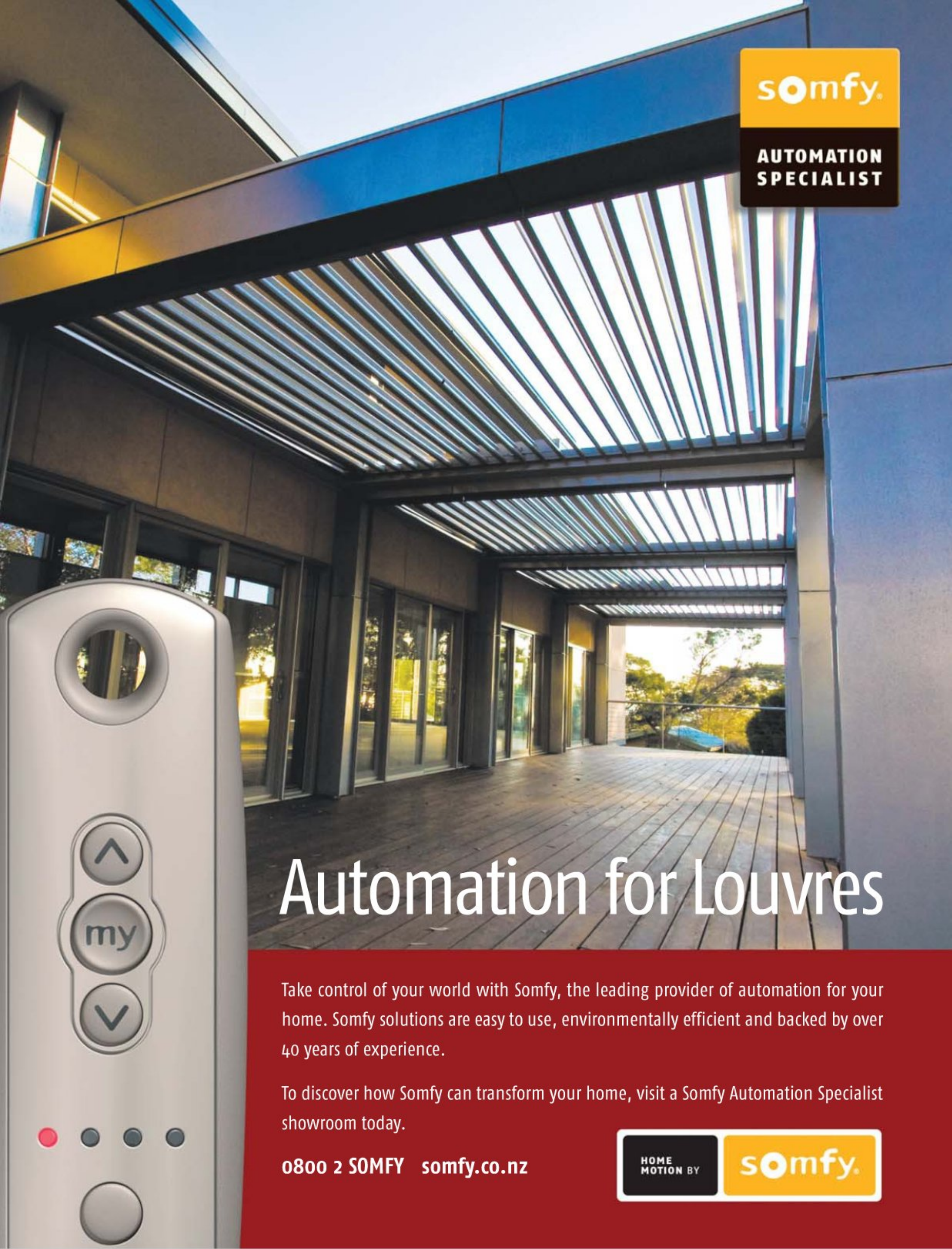
SNUGGLE UP One of the easiest ways to add texture to your home is to throw in a colourful blanket. Red mohair **throw** $219 from Trumps of Remuera, (09) 520 1215.

COLOUR UP Don't be afraid to mix prints, plaids and plains – it adds a casual and relaxing feel to soft furnishings. The unifying feature here is the choice of colours. Burnt orange mohair **throw** $219 from Trumps of Remuera, (09) 520 1215; velvet cushion (bottom right) stylist's own.

EMBELLISH Loose floral prints are fun and never overly stuffy. Combine with a colour-matched fabric in a soft check for an unexpected twist. Autumnal **floral cushion** $90 from Anami Textiles, (09) 307 1593; **gingham cushion** covered in Brunschwig & Fils' Melon Provence check, available through Decortex e Famiglia, (09) 303 3545.

WELL COUCHED Feather cushions and sumptuous fabrics make an enormous difference to the comfort level of any sofa. **Couch** covered in Decortex's Creamy fabric, available through Decortex e Famiglia, (09) 303 3545.

PRETTY POUFFE Add interest and fun with a soft pouffe or ottoman that, with a tray, can double as an occasional table. **Ottoman** covered in Brunschwig & Fils' Westbury Bouquet linen and cotton print fabric, available through Decortex e Famiglia, (09) 303 3545; **vase** $5 from Vida Flores, (09) 523 5454.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Sure to rise

Vintage cookery books are a fascinating snapshot of our economic and culinary history

WORDS PAM NEVILLE / **STYLIST** TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** JANE USSHER & BELINDA MERRIE

"These days fundraising cookbooks are often done commercially, so you don't get the personal recipes"

ABOVE Anthropologist and author David Veart. **PREVIOUS PAGE** *The Dominion Mark Fruit Book* (1934) was published by the New Zealand Fruit Growers' Federation and offered housewives suggestions for preparing fruit for the table.

THE TITLE OF A new book on New Zealand cooking, *First Catch Your Weka*, is a quotation from explorer Charles Heaphy, who was describing Christmas dinner in 1841. Stuff it with sage and onion and roast it on a stick, he advised. Heaphy was playing with the words of Mrs Hannah Glasse, an 18th century British author famous for beginning recipes with, "First catch your hare".

First Catch Your Weka is more history book than cookbook. Written by David Veart, an Auckland anthropologist, it maps what we eat, and how and why our national food tastes and habits have changed and developed. The book also reproduces dozens of recipes, so readers can easily cook their way through the history lesson.

Inspiration came from Veart's collection of 500 old cookbooks, begun when he left home with his mother's 1955 *Edmonds Cookery Book* in the 1970s and honed in the 80s when he was caring for young children and needed a low-cost hobby.

Favourite books are old fundraisers from school committees, tennis clubs and charities – the ones with personal recipes from members, such as Mrs GL Denniston's Curried Crayfish (1919), Miss AM Leighton's Brown Betty (1941), and Mrs JC Gower-James' Cocoanut Ice (1958). "These days fund-raising cookbooks are often done commercially," says David, "so you don't get the personal recipes from individually named members."

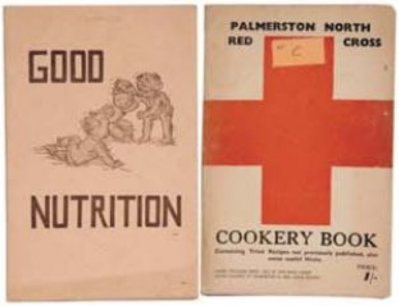
Among the recipes that intrigue him is a cake from the Dunedin-published *St Andrew's Cookery Book* (1905). It features layers of dates stuffed with blanched almonds. Another is a flounder-with-olives dish from an Auckland Travel Club cookbook of 1941 – "a very clever concept for the time". David finds the muttonbird paste with anchovies from *How to Cook New Zealand Fish* (1929) "interestingly salty".

Collecting cookbooks is still an affordable hobby. David says *The Up to Date Housewife*, published in 1926 in Dunedin and featured on the cover of *First Catch Your Weka* (above), can be found for less than $20. Fairs and garage sales are good sources of old fundraising cookbooks and family kitchens are worth investigating.

David says the holy grail for collectors is a book of recipes in the Maori language, written in the mid 1800s by Mary Ann Martin, the wife of New Zealand's first chief justice, William Martin – it's New Zealand's first cookbook. Lady Martin was known for tutoring Maori women in domesticity and also wrote a better-known book, *Our Maoris*, published in 1884. ■

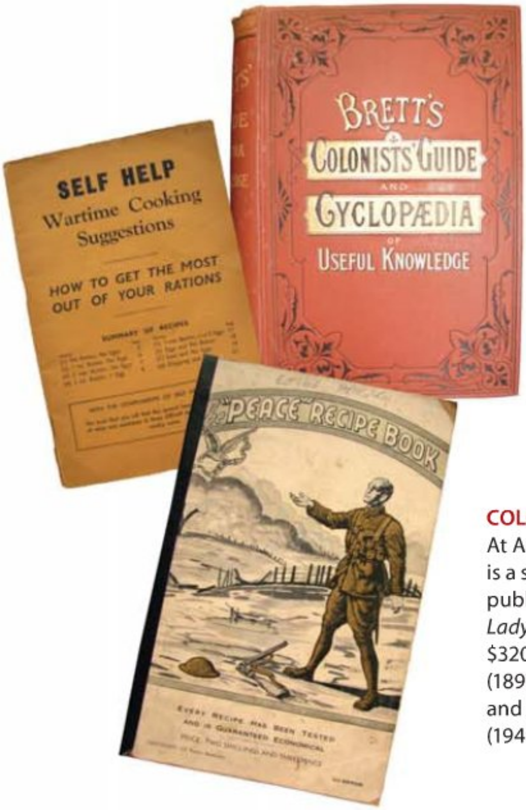
NATIONAL TREASURES

Bethunes @ Webb's (Webb's Auctions' rare book department) in Auckland has this Edmonds 1930s edition and a first edition of *Aunt Daisy's Radio Cookery Book* (1939) coming up in their September 20 auction. Together, they are expected to sell for more than $50. At a recent Bethunes auction, the Red Cross book at right, including a Department of Health *Good Nutrition* booklet, sold for more than $300; (09) 524 6804, webbs.co.nz.



THE TRUTH ABOUT COOKING

Evergreen Books of Devonport, Auckland, has *Tui's Commonsense Cookery* for sale for $40. Tui was the nom-de-plume of Norah Burnard, who wrote cookery columns for *NZ Dairy Exporter* and *Home Journal* before and during World War II. This one is for sale at Evergreen for $20; (09) 445 2960, evergreenbooks.co.nz.



COLONIAL COOKERY

At Anah Dunsheath Rare Books in Auckland is a selection of early cookbooks, many published more than a century ago. *Things a Lady Would Like to Know* (1874) is for sale for $320; others include *Brett's Colonists' Guide* (1897) $395, *Peace Recipe Book* (1916) $65 and *Self Help Wartime Cooking Suggestions* (1944) $40; (09) 379 0379, rarebooks.co.nz.

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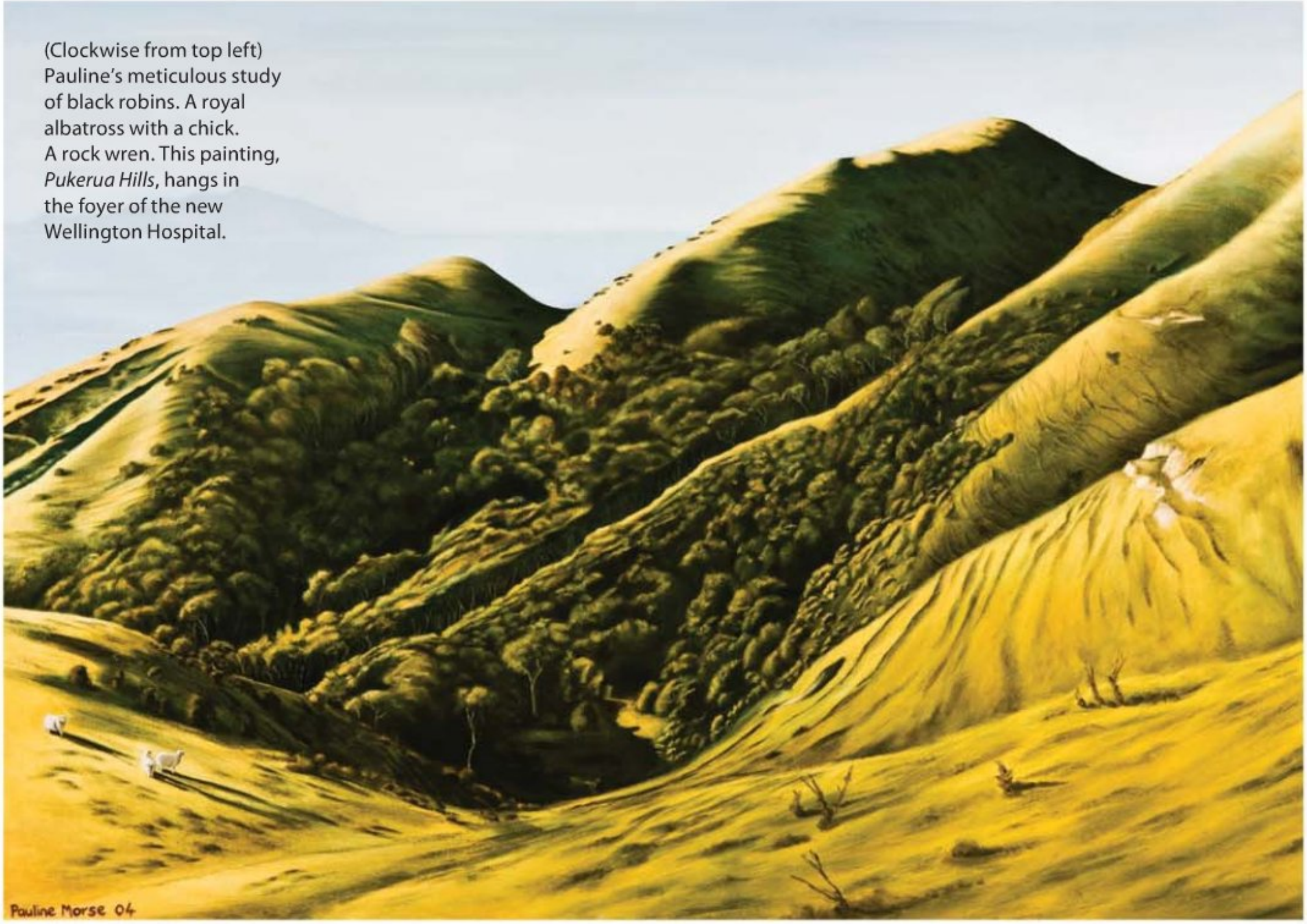
Picture this

Artist Pauline Morse draws her inspiration from the natural world and a desire to work with what she loves

STORY DIANA DEKKER / **PHOTOGRAPHS** PAUL McCREDIE



(Clockwise from top left) Pauline's meticulous study of black robins. A royal albatross with a chick. A rock wren. This painting, *Pukerua Hills*, hangs in the foyer of the new Wellington Hospital.

THIS PAGE Pauline deliberately chooses simple titles for her paintings, leaving viewers the freedom to find their own meaning in her work: (top) *Shelter Belt* and (above) *Rangitikei River*.

It's no surprise that Pauline Morse became an artist and illustrator of all things natural. She's the woman responsible for the images on some of the country's best-known stamps, including the 40 cent kiwi and the 45 cent rock wren stamps of the late 1990s.

Everything in her background conspired to lead her in the direction of a career combining art and the outdoors. She loved drawing as a child and gardening was always a family thing. After completing a degree in botany and zoology at Wellington's Victoria University, Pauline took a job with the Wildlife Service.

"I was trawling round the country, out in the field and getting to places I'd never otherwise have got to."

Then, on a Pacific island holiday in the late 1970s, Pauline fell into conversation with the director of the Fiji Museum and a new door opened. "He was writing a book on the birds of Fiji and couldn't find anyone to illustrate it. My mouth fell open and I said I'd do it."

Despite having no experience of drawing birds, apart from "a few sketches here and there", Pauline held tight to a strong belief: do what you love.

Pauline's bird paintings are painstakingly detailed – taking up to two months to complete – with a price tag that's started to reflect that

"A colleague told me my first birds were rubbish," she recalls – a comment that spurred her on to seek excellence. She taught herself to draw anatomically correct birds by close observation of specimens in the museum. Three years later a field guide to Fijian birds, full of her meticulous watercolours, was published and Pauline's illustrating career took flight.

Someone at the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society saw her work and asked her to illustrate cards for them. Someone else at New Zealand Post saw the cards and commissioned stamps with bird images – eventually she also produced 24 featuring butterflies and tuatara.

Pauline's bird paintings are painstakingly detailed – taking up to two months to complete – with a price tag that's started to reflect that. Five pictures have been sold to an American collector who also has work by bird artists Raymond Ching and Robert Bateman on his walls. But Pauline has held on to some of her original bird paintings and plans to keep them.

These days her passion and talent have been diverted into landscape painting. She often finds her subjects in the neighbourhood of her home in Pukerua Bay, a small seaside community north of Porirua; what she sees is refined until she can reproduce its essence on canvas.

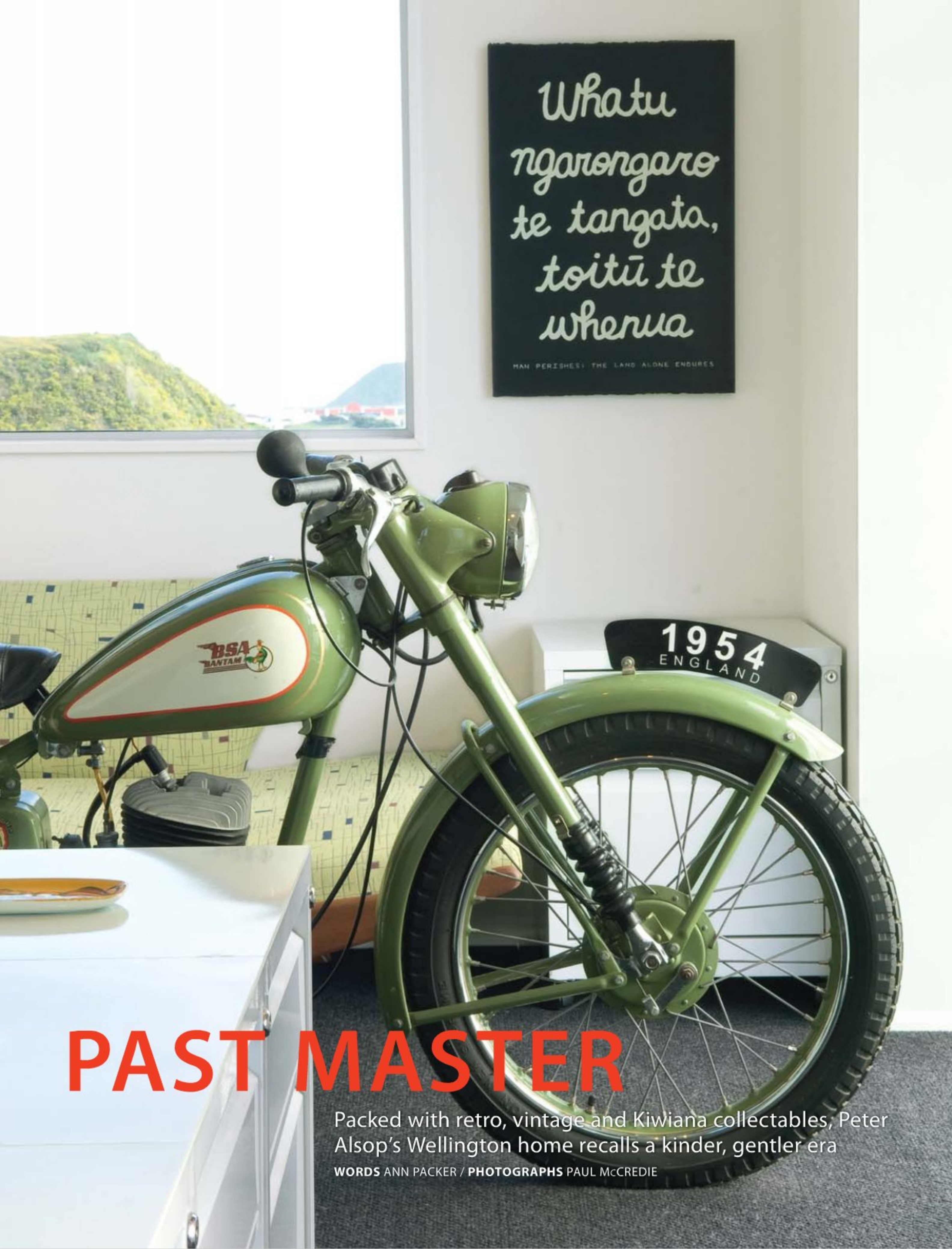
These landscapes have a subtle conservation message. One image captures the hills at the back of the bay, with the last remnants of bush cupped in the bare folds of earth. Of two smaller companion paintings, one focuses on two kahikatea trees – all that is left of a native forest – while the other depicts sculptural, tortured shapes of macrocarpa and pine. Quirky, angular hill forms are a favourite preoccupation.

Pauline works from home, in an eyrie of a studio that overlooks the steep coast and Kapiti Island. She has lived there, she says almost apologetically, for 30 years, since she was in her early 20s and fell in love with the place as a bare paddock. Her original tiny Lockwood house has been extended beyond recognition and the bare paddock has been turned into a green and fragrant garden.

New Zealand natives, English cottage garden plants and a serenely ordered corner inspired by a trip to China create an inspirational setting – just the place for an artist with an eye for the bigger picture.

See more at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz ■

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Stamps from a series Pauline designed for New Zealand Post in the 1980s and 90s. Pauline at work on *Pine Trees – Makara*. Brushes in front of an unfinished work, *Poplars*.



PAST MASTER

Packed with retro, vintage and Kiwiana collectables, Peter Alsop's Wellington home recalls a kinder, gentler era

WORDS ANN PACKER / **PHOTOGRAPHS** PAUL McCREDIE

THIS PAGE The red, white and blue tekoteko in the kitchen of Peter Alsop and Airihi Mahuika's Evans Bay house were cast from an old advertising sign.
OPPOSITE In the main bedroom, a BSA Bantam motorcycle adds another dimension to the view out to Cook Strait.

THIS PAGE A collection of German ceramics in the entrance hall complements *Navigator*, by Melbourne-based New Zealander Peter James Smith.
OPPOSITE Airihi at the Four Square kitchen table. Carterton sculptor Sean Crawford's corrugated dog. Tibetan terrier Archie with Ian Scott's *Emptiness of all Endeavour*.

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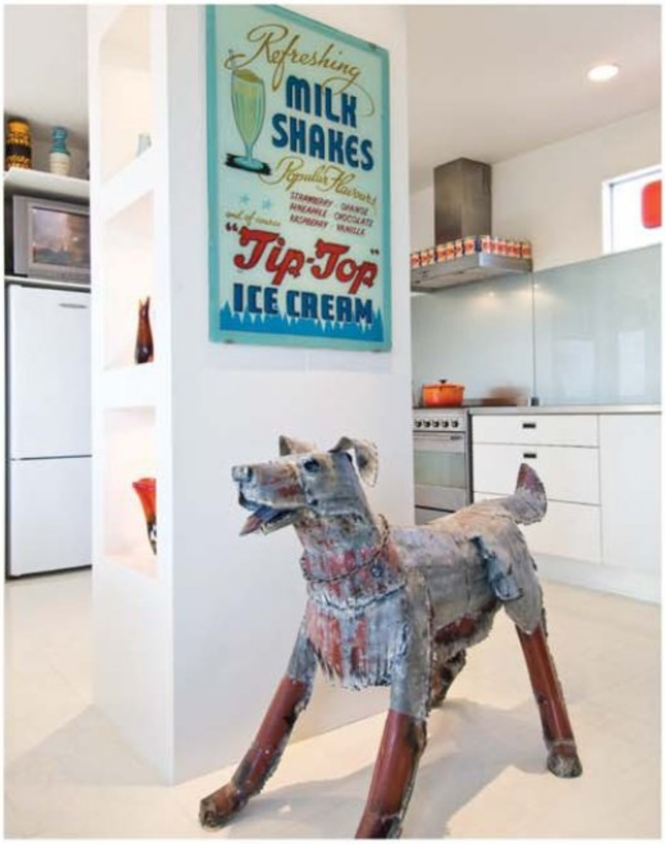
Refreshing
MILK SHAKES
Popular Flavours
STRAWBERRY ORANGE
PINEAPPLE CHOCOLATE
RASPBERRY VANILLA
and of course
"Tip-Top"
ICE CREAM

"There's too much to display but too much emotional connection to let go"

THIS PAGE Tibetan terrier Tenzin lent his name to Peter's rocking chair design, positioned to take in the view from the front balcony; Sue McMillan of Seam made the cushions.
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top) Graham Kirk's comical Cuba Street scene and Peter Fink's pohutukawa compete with views to Evans Bay. Airihi and Peter collaborated on *The Proverbial* series. Behind the collection of Edmonds baking powder tins are a classic mid-century Hans Wegner chair, Airihi's oak desk, made from a wine barrel, and a view of Lake Wakatipu, also in the mid-century style.

PETER ALSOP IS A COLLECTOR – and an avid one at that. But, despite the potential for riotous displays of those treasured objects, he and his wife Airihi Mahuika live in surprisingly restrained harmony in their harbourside home overlooking Wellington's Evans Bay. By selecting, editing and resisting the temptation to go totally overboard, they have made their gallery-like home a timeless mix of design eras and styles – from the 1890s to the present, the ornate to the industrial.

Though Airihi is not a collector herself, she'll admit she enjoys sitting on a reupholstered New Zealand Rail seat while she waits for coffee from their La Cimbali espresso machine and working at a dining table that was once a Four Square grocery store sign in Russell. She does, however, reserve the power of veto. Too much orange – Peter's favourite colour – and too little clear floor space for Tibetan terriers Tenzin and Archie and she'll start to get twitchy.

Collections are kept tightly reined in and put to good use: an extensive selection of German ceramics in the entranceway is carefully grouped by colour and in the study a string of Edmonds baking powder tins across the front of Peter's desk neatly obscures power cords.

Customising their industrial-chic home while it was being built six years ago offered Peter the opportunity to include nooks and crannies for efficient storage and to showcase selected objects from his stash of retro collectables. Those include an immaculately restored Shell petrol bowser, Tip Top ice cream signs, a vintage BSA Bantam motorcycle and original New Zealand travel posters from the heyday of train travel and tourist hotels. Anything old and iconic, especially if it has pop-art references, is assured of a place.

Peter takes great delight in reminiscing about times past – the days when "good old-fashioned values were the norm". >

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Toitu te kainga whatunga-rongaro he tangata
Ehara a Hikurangi i te maunga haere
Ka mahi te mea i tohia ki te wai o Tu-tawake
Tukua atu ki tua ki nga ra o te waru e
Ka mahi te ringaringa areareahaki taua
Waiho ma te tangata e mihi

PACIFIC
CORNED BEEF

THE LONGEST
WHITE CLOUD IN TOWN
EDMONDS

THIS PAGE A French rococo commode makes a splash in the clean-lined bathroom; the clock reflected in the mirror was bought in France. Dramatically dark anaglypta wallpaper in the guest room. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top) From his desk, Peter has a view of a sculpture he made with Jake Yocum of Izzat Design, commemorating the now-extinct huia bird. Pieces from Peter's series *Icons of NZ ID*. A Michael Tuffery bull.

"Back then, purchases from your local dairy were recorded in an exercise book and honestly paid on time."

A director of Staple Furniture and Design in Wellington, Peter is not a designer by training. His degrees are in mathematics and economics and by day he works for the government's drug-funding agency Pharmac. But, as a long-time converter of Kiwiana logos and labels to his own pop-art ends, he keeps his hand in the art world by creating such pieces as his Tenzin rocking chair on the front balcony. He's a fan of Sir Edmund Hillary's sherpa, Tenzing Norgay – a man who "helped take New Zealand from down under to the top of the world". Peter thinks the Nepalese mountaineer also proved that "legends are not always leaders and that supporting others is virtuous in itself".

Having a hand in the design process has helped the couple keep the house streamlined – entertainment technology is tucked away in a wall accessible from both living room and kitchen and a gentle push against the white textured wall covered with framed travel posters allows access to the guest bedroom. "I like gadgets," says Peter, "but I prefer they are only heard and not seen." In the same vein, a custom-made roller door provides access under the stairs without blocking the passage.

But, though Peter admires the clean-lined, minimalist look, there's plenty to reflect a very different aesthetic in the home he and Airihi call an "urban bach". In the main bathroom, a French rococo chest from Wellington store Landed makes a scarlet and black statement. The ornate dark-stained 1890s kauri china cabinet in the kitchen was found on TradeMe where Peter also came across the Shell petrol bowser, along with a "bunch of rusty parts and a replica sign set". He tracked down the bowser's globe top in Auckland and Newtown panel beater Kim Jackson carried out its restoration.

Signs and symbols are a common theme. They're seen in found objects such as the glass Tip Top sign and the red Fagg's coffee sign, a gift from their coffee machine mechanic. And they're in Peter's own art which he hires out online through nzpride.co.nz, along with the travel posters, his collection of Whites Aviation aerial photographs and work by such New Zealand artists as Ian Scott, Heather Straka and Michael Tuffery.

Just as Airihi has come to terms with the addictive nature of her husband's collecting gene, Peter accepts the pitfalls of his passion: "There's too much to display but too much emotional connection to let go."

See more at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

Dressed for success

A Hamilton couple threw caution to the wind during their charity fundraiser house makeover

WORDS DENISE IRVINE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** NICOLA TOPPING

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Gaelene and Howard Falconer in the sheltered courtyard of their Matangi home. A pretty mirror, vase and swan are features of the guest bedroom revamped by Kate Fitzpatrick Home, Cambridge. Handsome cedar and glass front doors. French accessories and colourful butterflies in the nursery by Home Sweet Home, Hamilton.
OPPOSITE The French Provincial-style home lends itself to formal box hedging with a fountain, 'Iceberg' roses and ficus-covered entrance pillars.

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top) The living room, with its subtle soft furnishings by Habberleys Interior Design, Hamilton, is Gaelene's favourite room. The tiled entrance hall has a balustrade made by Howard Falconer. The family room was made over in chocolate and leather by Freedom Furniture. **OPPOSITE** Freedom Furniture also styled the mellow-toned kitchen. Gaelene and Howard. Asian-themed decorations on the dining table.

LAST NOVEMBER, Gaelene and Howard Falconer could be found hovering – some might say hiding – in their office while a team of designers added the finishing touches to their family home. They were making changes to almost every room, leaving the Falconers with a fresh new look in their French Provincial-style house at Matangi, near Hamilton.

The couple didn't have much say in this extensive makeover; instead, they told the six Waikato interior design stores involved what they hoped for, then let them have their stylish way. "They used our home as a canvas, as a showcase for their work," says Gaelene who, with Howard, has raised four children there.

The Falconers offered their property last year for the makeover as a fundraiser for Hamilton's annual hot-air balloon festival run by Balloons over Waikato Charitable Trust. Festival event manager Michele Connell had come up with the idea of asking local retailers and designers to be part of a project where each would decorate a room in a home which would then be open to the public for a weekend festival fundraiser.

So the ASB Balloomin Gorgeous Makeover House was duly launched in 2007 with a makeover of Michele's own rural villa (see *NZ House & Garden*, November 2008) – a great success. The Falconers' home was chosen for the second event and about 1100 people visited their revamped property last November, raising a tidy sum for the balloon festival and leaving the family with new paintwork, curtains and some furnishings and ideas they might never have considered.

The Falconers built on their Waikato lifestyle block only 12 years ago but the elegant, understated home has long since melded with the lush green landscape and looks as if it has been there much longer. The former Tokoroa dairy farmers were seduced by the peace and beauty of this Matangi country lane when they were hunting for land. "All we could hear were the birds. It was so quiet," says Gaelene. >

Howard loved the idea of building their home and he worked full-time on the project with a builder. "I'd done a lot of cowsheds in the past," he jokes.

They settled on the timeless attractions of rural French architecture as a template, choosing old-style solid plaster walls and oiled cedar and rimu joinery. The house has a steeply pitched iron roof, slim windows, elegant proportions and a handsome front entrance with sturdy pillars and terracotta tiling.

"People always say it has a nice feel about it, a soul of its own," says Gaelene.

The timing was perfect for a makeover; the children had all left home – each taking their bedroom furniture with them – and Gaelene and Howard had already made a start on redecorating.

Designers worked on the four upstairs bedrooms, the formal downstairs living room and the large, more relaxed family room. The smallest bedroom at the top of the stairs has now become an exquisite nursery, repainted in cool creams and taupe. The wardrobe doors have been refitted with French-style wire mesh panels and a wall installation of replica monarch butterflies provides a burst of colour.

Gaelene says this is the room where visitors have traditionally put babies to sleep so they're close to the action downstairs. And, perhaps thinking ahead to future grandchildren, she and Howard are pleased with the changes.

Another light, airy bedroom is now fitted in blue and green retro florals and painted in a subtle pearl lustre, reprising a look from the 1950s. The neighbouring bedroom is more masculine in style with faux leather wallpaper, a deep chocolate and black colour scheme and some retro Kiwiana features.

Gaelene is delighted with the previously tired master bedroom's luxurious new look in chocolate, cream and bronze. The Falconers had just bought a new bed and wanted to keep it, as well as their antique dresser. >

THIS PAGE The nursery was created by Home Sweet Home, with a French chest and chair, antique iron cradle and replica monarch butterflies.
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) A guest room in crisp green and white by Kate Fitzpatrick Home. The Falconers love the colours chosen for their bedroom, revamped by Hamilton's Paula Hassard. Another bedroom, by Furniture Creations, Hamilton, features faux leather walls and a Kiwiana mirror.

The formal garden, with its buxus and avenue of 'Mop Top' robinias, was enhanced by an archway and fountain from The Complete Garden. They also installed a concrete-topped table and iron chairs near the knot garden.

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Downstairs, the designers enhanced the formal living room with beautiful soft furnishings and cream linen curtains to complement the French green walls, the stone fireplace, artworks and other striking pieces the Falconers already owned. Similarly, the family room is a mix of new colours and textures working with existing features; in this room the hues are more mellow and earthy, reflecting the tones of the matai floor.

Both these rooms open to the outdoors through generous doors and windows that frame the Falconers' meticulously kept gardens and courtyards. After some design help getting started, Gaelene manages the gardening herself in what she describes as an easy programme of "spray, mulch, clip". She also mows the extensive lawn, having taken over from a commercial mower who "wasn't fussy enough".

The Falconers planted their gardens in a simple colour palette of white and deep burgundy. White plants include time-honoured 'Iceberg' roses, white agapanthus and arum lilies and the burgundy accents are achieved with copper beech trees and 'The Prince' rose.

For the makeover, outdoor design firms worked on the grounds, introducing sturdy wooden and marble furnishings and accessories to enhance the Falconers' extensive planting and paving.

The feedback from the many visitors who toured the house during the open weekend has been great and the whole family is thrilled with their home's new look. Says Howard, with more than a touch of understatement, "It was a bit like sprucing it up for a wedding".

See nzhouseandgarden.co.nz for more images of the Falconer house.

This year's Balloomin Gorgeous Makeover House will be open to the public from October 30 to November 1. Tickets are $15 pre-sold, (07) 838 4645, or $20 at the door. All proceeds go to the Balloons over Waikato Charitable Trust, balloonsoverwaikato.co.nz. ■

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Lofty living

A Matakana couple has created a home with an eye to the future as well as their glorious views

WORDS PRUE DASHFIELD / **PHOTOGRAPHS** MARK SMITH

THIS PAGE Solar panels on the sloping roof of Niki Bezzant and Sandy McNeur's Matakana home absorb sunshine and a reservoir collects the rain. **OPPOSITE** Rails behind the sliding doors in the master bedroom ensure the occupants don't fall out; Niki bought the chaise covered in a Florence Broadhurst print at auction. The glass-encased open-plan living and dining areas are flooded with light all day.

THIS PAGE Niki and Sandy picking limes. The sofa and chairs belonged to Niki's grandfather – "We've got photographs of my father on them as a kid" – and she found the dining table on TradeMe. **OPPOSITE** Sandy reads by the fire; behind him, sliders open to a little vegetable and herb garden and landscaped planting; Niki bought the cowhide rug in front of the Corten steel fireplace on TradeMe.

From four scruffy hectares just out of Matakana, Niki Bezzant and her husband Sandy McNeur have created a paradise of such cornucopian productivity you wonder how they can possibly reap, let alone eat, all they've sown.

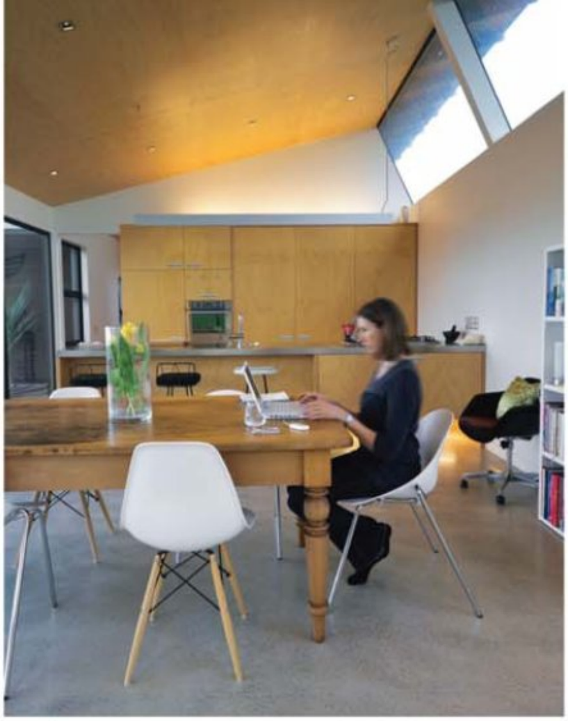
Yes, the editor of the *New Zealand Healthy Food Guide* does know how to cook it – for *NZ House & Garden*'s visit, she made little feijoa and apple cakes that are worthy of a patent. Yes, they share their surplus with the neighbours and, yes, they've done an awful lot of bottling. Even so, Four Winds – named for a hefty stone sculpture purchased after a few drinks – is fruitier than a Christmas cake.

They bought the property not for its bog or its thick yellow blanket of gorse but for its old trees (Sandy), sea view (Niki) and the potential they've worked so hard to realise. By the time the steel and weatherboard house designed by their close friend, award-winning architect Ken Crosson, was finished last year, most of the landscaping and plantings were complete.

One project was the orchard – apples, pears, peaches, all manner of citrus, figs and feijoas. Another was the "edible bank" – olives, pine nuts, macadamia, cherimoya, almonds, quince and guava. But perhaps the most impressive of all the exterior improvements is the grassy plateau – reclaimed from swamp – where Niki, Sandy and guests eat most summer nights and lunch year-round.

Sheltered from any number of winds by banks and a 2.8ha block of established and regenerated native bush, this broad amphitheatre puts the city dweller's notion of an "outdoor living area" properly in its place.

It's also a kind of memorial to the family ties that brought them here from Auckland: Niki's aunt, Trish Allen, and her husband, the late, legendary permaculturalist Joe Polaischer, of Matakana's Rainbow Valley Farm. >



THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) The floors throughout are Tasmanian oak and the ceilings hoop pine. A collection of classic chairs surrounds the dining table. In the kitchen, hoop pine cabinetry conceals a fridge, microwave and butler's pantry.
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) The ground-floor entrance. A bath is positioned for bush and Sandspit views in the master en suite. The main bathroom. Niki relaxes on cushions from Melbourne's Ikea.

Joe built the broad benches and vast table carved with the property's Maori name – Nga Hau e Wha – from Rainbow Valley macrocarpa. The pizza-oven-building workshop he conducted at Four Winds created the hobbit-like domed oven, which works like a charm, he inspired the compost loo and it was at his behest that Niki and Sandy planted a few exotic trees – a liquidambar and two tulip trees – in the lawn. "Joe was a big fan of trees that reflect the seasons," says Sandy.

It was here, too, that they parked the caravan in which they spent year after year of weekends, toiling away in the soil and washing it off afterwards in piping-hot rainwater gravity-fed through a gas califont to their open-air shower and bath.

Freshening up al fresco gave the couple so much pleasure they asked architect Ken Crosson, whose own Coromandel bach won a 2003 Home of the Year Award, to replicate the sensation for them. Consequently, water in their second-floor en suite bathroom drains through the kind of slatted floor found in shearing sheds and full-length, sliding windows open to the airy wide blue yonder. To stay on the safe side, a precautionary glass parapet confines them to the shower.

Niki and Sandy's other requests included three bedrooms, environmentally sustainable materials and an exterior sympathetic to the home's rural setting. Otherwise they left it pretty much to Ken. If they didn't know exactly what they wanted, he did. >

PICTURES OF BATH AND NIKI ON BED BY JOANNA WICKHAM

"It's like living in the sky up here. It's always light, even on the darkest days"

The living quarters – including bedrooms, two bathrooms and a roomy kitchen/living area – are above a double garage with laundry, an office and gym equipment.

Niki and Sandy love the rusted and rustic Corten steel that clads much of the exterior and the open fireplace. The swirls and waves of orangey-bronze that emerge as each panel ages in its own idiosyncratic way are a look, not a rusty-house nightmare. About three-quarters of the wall space is glass.

"It's like living in the sky up here," says Niki. "It's always light, even on the darkest days."

And all that transparency admits not just light but lovely, lofty views of their own land, Sandspit inlet with Kawau Island and the Coromandel Peninsula behind it and the top of Little Barrier to the north-east. Horizontal windows in the rear walls frame rural landscapes and, in summer, glorious sunsets. The sliding glass doors across the face of the house open to a big deck of sustainable timber – "Every window is a living piece of art," says Sandy.

For Niki, the house was a revelation. "When we moved in, I 'got' what architects can do. He had designed a house for us." Adds Sandy, "We think it's a house for the future."

On the roof, a large catchment area funnels rainwater into two underground tanks; it is heated by solar panels. The insulation is wool, the lighting energy-efficient and a high-tech waste-water system pumps grey water through the orchard.

And that's where Sandy, a fashion stock-clearance expert and founder of New Zealand's first hybrid-car taxi company, Matakabs, is often to be found. "I love the outdoors," he says. "I'm very happy mowing lawns – and, with three acres of grass, there's a lot of mowing to be done. Niki takes care of the inside."

"It's a good division of labour," says she. ■

TOP AND CENTRE PICTURE BY JOANNA WICKHAM

THIS PAGE The wedge-shaped deck points towards Sandspit like the prow of a ship. **OPPOSITE** (from top) "Living in the sky." Niki and Sandy eat most summer nights and lunch year-round on this grassy plateau; the domed pizza oven works like a charm. Angled windows above the rusted Corten steel rear wall catch the setting sun.

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Terra firma

After six fascinating years in New York, an Auckland couple are grateful to have their feet on home soil again

WORDS DEB BARTLETT / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BELINDA MERRIE

THIS PAGE A corner of Bridget Hanley and Mike Allen's living room exemplifies their Parnell home's interior style: a mid-century lamp, a black-framed pull-up chair, silk cushions, a vintage rug, an American green ceramic stool and *Sail Boats,* an abstract oil painting by Florence Luxford, all work in harmony.
OPPOSITE A sunny spot in the dressing room, which was added during renovations.

SIAM NOSES HIS beefy frame through the cat door to inspect his food bowl. He and his sister, Miss Greene, make the most of indoor/outdoor living these days; they were once apartment cats and, before that, homeless. Their owners – Bridget Hanley, director of Auckland interiors store Mid Century Design and her husband Mike Allen, an international energy consultant – rescued the kittens eight years ago from a rubbish bag outside the Siam restaurant on Greene Street in Jersey City, New York, where the couple had lived since 1995.

"Mike ran a geothermal consultancy for years and travel had always been a big part of his work," says Bridget. "When he was headhunted by a company in New York, we were thrilled."

Living in a brownstone full of fascinating neighbours in downtown Jersey City – "an area so scuzzy it was used as the backdrop for movies like *Godzilla*" – the former public relations whiz felt the need of a new professional calling. So she completed a diploma in interior design over the Hudson River at Manhattan's prestigious Parsons the New School for Design and went to work for some of the city's most influential designers. >

THESE PAGES The 1973 painting in the TV room, *Palely Loitering*, is New Zealand artist Phillip O'Sullivan's take on the Hudson River; the grass-paper wallcovering reminds Bridget of New York interiors. Art, photographs and a mid-century bureau in the foyer make an immediate statement.

"We kept asking ourselves, 'What are we doing up in the air?' After so many years of apartment living, we really wanted to get our feet in the dirt"

It was an eyebrow-raising experience at times. "There is serious money in New York and you really get to see it in that industry. Mike would come home from worrying about creating solutions for clean energy and I'd be stressing because Mrs Kozlowski's sofa frill hadn't arrived from the supplier on time."

After six years of exploring their adopted city and much of the United States, the pair moved home to Auckland just a month before the World Trade Centre attacks in 2001. But, in a twist of fate, they were in New York on the way to Europe the day it happened. "I still can't make sense of the city without those two beautiful buildings. It's taken a long time to process what happened that day," says Bridget.

Back in Auckland, Mike and Bridget immediately bought a duplex apartment in Herne Bay and just as quickly regretted it. "We lasted less than a year because we kept asking ourselves, 'What are we doing up in the air?' After so many years of apartment living, we really wanted to get our feet in the dirt."

In search of terra firma, the pair sold the duplex and settled in a property that Mike had owned for a while: a classic 1950s red brick and tile two-bedroom townhouse in Parnell, one of Auckland's leafiest suburbs. The location was ideal but the place was small. Council restrictions prevented them from extending up or out, so they dug down. Mike, Bridget and the cats moved out for six months while architect Paul Leuschke and the builders trucked out tonnes of earth to add four new rooms underneath the house.

Upstairs, one of the original bedrooms and the laundry were transformed into a spacious, clean-lined kitchen with plenty of storage and a wide Silestone benchtop that doubles as a servery when the pair, who love to entertain, cook for family and friends.

From wide east-facing windows in the dining and living area, expansive views across Hobson Bay and around to Mt Hobson make for mesmerising weather-watching. The room embodies Bridget's design aesthetic: layered, comfortable and filled with objects infused with meaning and memories. >

THIS PAGE In the living room *Matapouri Bay* by Tom Burnett hangs above Bridget's collection of Chinese ceramic fu dogs. **OPPOSITE** (from left) Bridget was thrilled to find eight vintage 1950s Thonet chairs exactly like the ones her parents owned; the table was shipped from New York and extends to seat 12. Bridget in the kitchen.

The antique Chinese rugs and her collection of grinning turquoise ceramic fu dogs are a bit of a hangover, she says, from the years she spent in Singapore as a child with her family and four mid-century American lamps reflect her love of that design period.

In the TV room, a stand-out feature wall in Aalto's 'Jelly Bean' and a scattering of marine-themed accessories add an extra dimension to the space where Mike and Bridget spend most of their evenings. "I think this room became a seaside room by default," she says with a smile.

Down the sisal-covered stairs are cool, quiet, private spaces that can act as self-contained accommodation for visitors: a laundry, bathroom, double bedroom and a sitting room that leads to the garden. "Our guests love it down here. It's just like a separate little apartment," says Bridget. "We're so busy at work we really only go 'below stairs' on weekends to retreat to the garden room and to do laundry."

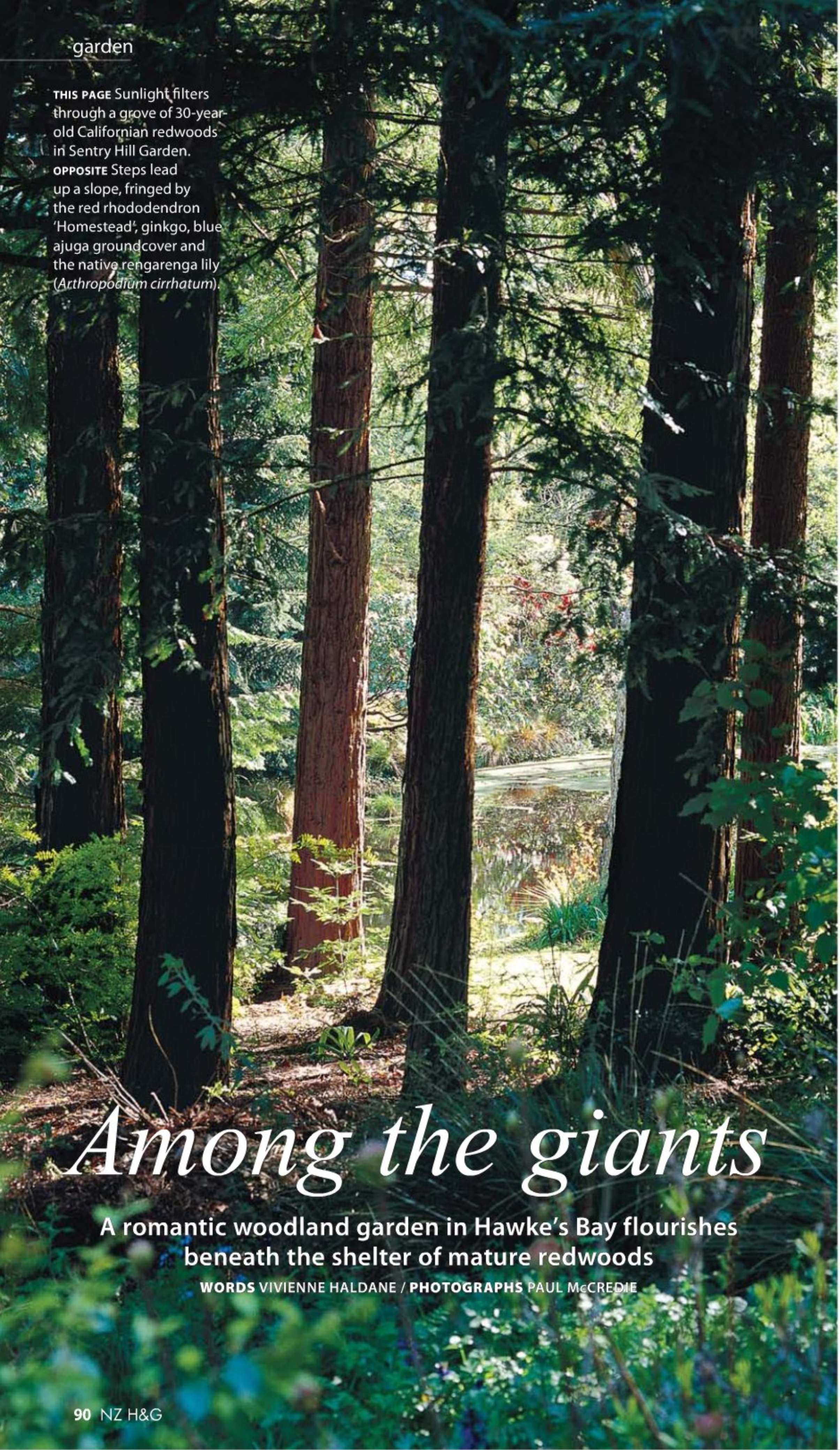
Work for Bridget is her Newmarket store, where she sells 1950s-70s American furnishings. "It combines the two worlds of design and collecting and I'm a born collector." Her customers, she says, are intelligent, interesting and loyal. "You need to be comfortable with things that have had a life before to shop there."

Mike still travels often for work – he owns a Singapore-based business that raises finance for clean-energy projects – but bases himself at the Mid Century Design store when he's home. "The business is very much a partnership for us," says Bridget. "There's very little he can't do – and he's the ideal Mr Shifter."

With their hands in the soil at last, Mike and Bridget revelled in planting the garden and slowly discovering what would work. They treasure the ancient plum tree, which still produces rich red fruit that makes delicious jam. The small, steeply sloping site was made over by some "lovely and very clever friends" who created three tiers: a wooden deck on the top level with French doors from the kitchen, a gravel path and steps that lead down to a patch of smooth lawn and a courtyard covered in 50s-influenced crazy pavers.

It's out here that Mike and Bridget's former street cats now lead the life of Riley, dozing in the sun and drinking from the huge mosaic bird bath. "They don't know how lucky they are half the time, but we do," says Bridget. "We love living here. Even though the area's quite built up, the house is very private and we have wonderful neighbours too – there's a real sense of community in the area." ■

ABOVE (from left) The bottom corner of the couple's three-tiered garden. Mike and Bridget. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) The cream, salmon and brown fabrics in the master bedroom give a lush, serene feel. A light-filled corner of the downstairs bathroom. With its 'Pagoda Red' Chinese Chippendale chair, the garden room is a favourite place to relax with a book; the oil is *Portrait of a Woman with Red Lips* by Susan Burki. Tartan wallpaper and a chandelier make the guest bathroom upstairs special. French doors open from the kitchen to the sheltered, sunny deck.



THIS PAGE Sunlight filters through a grove of 30-year-old Californian redwoods in Sentry Hill Garden. **OPPOSITE** Steps lead up a slope, fringed by the red rhododendron 'Homestead', ginkgo, blue ajuga groundcover and the native rengarenga lily (*Arthropodium cirrhatum*).

Among the giants

A romantic woodland garden in Hawke's Bay flourishes beneath the shelter of mature redwoods

WORDS VIVIENNE HALDANE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** PAUL McCREDIE

If the lady of Shalott were to appear in a boat on the glistening pond in John and Irene White's garden, she probably wouldn't raise a ripple of surprise. Though the natural, spring-fed pond is the undisputed star of Sentry Hill Garden, it's only one of many features that grace this serenely romantic woodland oasis.

John and Irene like to work together and their 3.2ha garden has been a work in progress, with boundary fences pushed out further as time could be snatched from farm and family duties.

When their four children grew up and moved away from their 202ha sheep farm, nestled near the foothills of the Ruahine Ranges in Hawke's Bay, the plant-loving pair continued to hone their splendid backyard. As they say, rather modestly, "It's just something we love to do in our spare time".

"When we started out more than 30 years ago," says Irene, "it was a bare paddock, apart from six totara and two poplar trees. We didn't have much overall concept about how the garden would take shape but were fortunate to have a good natural vista with a north-east-facing slope and, of course, the pond."

John spent hours carving gently stepped paths through the trees and building rustic bridges to link different areas of the arboretum. Redwood prunings were turned into simple seats from which to view the fruit of their labours.

"It isn't all hard work and no play," says John. "In some ways it gets easier to look after as time goes on, because we have three distinct storeys of plants, from canopy to groundcover. Anyway, it's the sort of garden that would need an army of gardeners to keep neat and tidy, so we don't worry too much about that." >

THIS PAGE The pond reflects the garden in the changing seasons; the trees include maple, birch, viburnum and a Nordmann fir (*Abies nordmanniana*). **OPPOSITE** John and Irene White.

THIS PAGE A vista from the bridge towards the pond and one of the garden's original 60-year-old poplars. *Rhododendron dendricola*. **OPPOSITE** A Japanese-style bridge crosses the bog garden that is filled with primulas, lilies, irises, astilbes and marsh marigolds.

Adds Irene firmly, "We wouldn't want it to be too neat and tidy anyway."

Though Irene says they have separate patches they like to work on, she admits that, "He will plant and I'll come along and titivate what he has started. He's always looking for space for special plants and tucked-away spots that he can develop further."

For her part, Irene loves to dash around, secateurs in hand, snipping and shaping foliage as she goes.

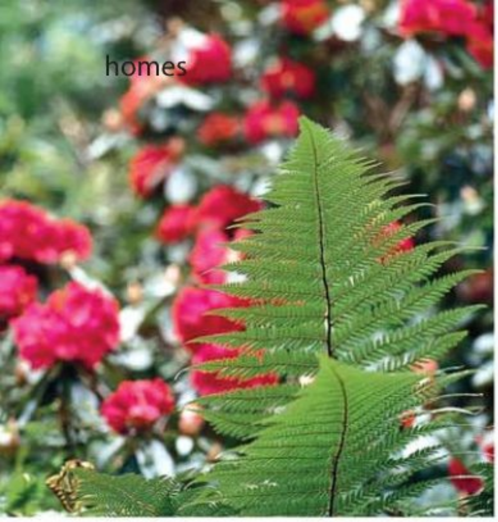
John has a particular fondness for rare species and over the years he has garnered an impressively international collection of plants: maples from Japan, Nepal and Taiwan; birches and ginkgo from China and Alaska; an endangered fir tree from Sicily.

"In the past we've bought plants from specialist growers such as Eric Appleton, Top Trees and, more recently, Peter Cave in Cambridge. It's getting more difficult for these growers to survive in business because of the import restrictions now in place," says John.

This gently spoken plantsman credits his parents, Tom and Prue White, for his love of all things botanical. They regularly took the family on garden outings and established a lovely garden of their own called Barnsdale.

Later on, John and Irene enjoyed travelling to Nepal, Europe, China and Japan to see for themselves the natural habitats of many of the plants that now grow at Sentry Hill.

Asked if he has a favourite among so many, John replies, "It would have to be the towering redwoods, especially the Chinese *Metasequoia* (dawn redwood), which has soft frond-like leaves that appear in spring and in autumn turn a glorious shade of russet." >



THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) A delicate fern contrasts with the bright red rhododendron 'Halfdan Lem'. The rhododendron 'Mary Tasker'. Blue ajuga. Arum lilies.
OPPOSITE Golden maples frame a pretty woodland of bluebells and hellebores.

"It isn't all hard work and no play. In some ways it gets easier"

Pine trees growing alongside the redwoods formed a shelter belt that allowed other plants to get established. The pines matured and were removed while the redwoods flourished. These days visitors can soak up the atmosphere, walking among these giants.

The Sentry Hill environment is also perfect for rhododendrons and azaleas. In spring their deliciously frothy blossoms amid the freshly leafing maples herald a welcome end to the dreariness of winter.

"Have you seen *Rhododendron rex* yet?" John asks Irene, as if recommending a visit to an old friend.

In an area they considered too wet for many plants, Irene and John established a bog garden that now overflows with kingcups (marsh marigolds), primulas *helodoxa*, *japonica* and *bulleyana*, *Iris sibirica* and delicate shuttlecock ferns.

To allow visitors to admire it more closely, John devised a sturdy walkway from one side to the other. "This is such a man's garden, with lots of trees, bridges and structures," says Irene. "I can't help but notice when we open the garden each year to the public, a lot of women say, 'My husband would love this!'"

Because he wanted to be able to stand back and admire the landscape, as a painter would his canvas, John marked out space for a lawn. "Open spaces are important and add relief and contrast to the rest of the garden," he says.

Beside the green belt, two grandfather poplars (the garden's original inhabitants) stand tall and nearby yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), native grasses, arum lilies and viburnum skirt the water's edge.

Though this is a much-admired part of the garden, John admits it's "a real battle" to maintain and keep weed-free.

Every few years a team of aborists arrives to trim and shape some of the trees and any destructive possums are given short shrift by a skilled team of "possum busters".

Being close to the mountains means there's ample rainfall – usually enough to combat the dry Hawke's Bay summers. In fact, drainage can be more of a problem for the garden when there's a wet spell.

Now a new generation is enjoying the results of their grandparents' labour. John and Irene's grandchildren make frequent visits to this magical garden where they delight in running and playing games beneath the leafy boughs and along the twisting paths. Who knows, they may even come upon the lovelorn Lady of Shalott.

Sentry Hill Garden is open to visitors by appointment, (06) 855 6861. ■

It's a small world

Patience and passion are key to the success of this precise bonsai garden

WORDS SHELLEY BRIDGEMAN / **PHOTOGRAPHS** KAREN ELLIS GREEN

THIS PAGE A full-sized *Pinus patula*, a grapefruit tree and a green tea hedge give structure to this part of Bob Langholm's bonsai garden.
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Bob (left) and Simon Misdale. A *Pinus contorta* has been shaped into an informal upright bonsai. A Japanese black pine slanting bonsai. A large-scale cascading bonsai shades a stone lantern.

"My entire garden is built on nature's energy. There are no artificial fertilisers or sprays here"

After 45 years of painstaking work by Bob Langholm (or Bob-san as his bonsai master calls him), there is a little piece of Japan buried deep in the heart of the central Auckland suburb of Mt Albert.

Plants and trees have been in Bob's blood his entire working life – he was chief propagator at the 75-hectare Auckland Domain for 26 years – so it's no surprise this passion spills into his own garden. His formal bonsai training began in Los Angeles in the 1970s and, before long, Bob was in Japan learning under a master. These days he is a master himself, patiently shaping not only trees but the minds of his students.

According to Bob, the definition of bonsai is "the restriction of root growth in a shallow container" and this method of gardening remains very popular in Japan where every square metre of living space counts. "Gardens in Japan tend to be small. They're often just rooftops or balconies, so compact and contained trees are perfect for these sites," he explains.

The intricately shaped but full-sized Hollywood juniper outside his villa is only a hint of the spectacle to come. Bob's best guess is that there are more than 400 bonsai trees in his backyard. Determined to push the boundaries, he relishes experimenting with trees that are usually left to their own devices.

As well as the traditional bonsai specimens of pines, cedars and junipers, he tames and trains New Zealand natives such as pohutukawa, kowhai, kauri, kahikatea and manuka.

A tree can be coaxed to form one of five main bonsai shapes – formal upright, informal upright, slanting, semi-cascade and full cascade – and they're all represented in this knee-high forest. Sometimes a young tree gives clues as to which shape it should be trained into, says Bob. If its trunk already has a diagonal lean, he may make it a slanting shape. At other times, he will delight in persuading a naturally tall tree to adopt a low and sprawling form. "Who says I can't make a cascade out of a *Pinus radiata*?"

To make a bonsai specimen, the heavy wooden inner roots must be cut away in order to slow the tree's rate of growth. Bonsai trees are always grown in pots, which help to contain their growth. Bob's process of choosing a pot sounds a bit like selecting a new shirt. "I hold different containers up to the tree to see which one shows it off to best advantage. Rectangular, square, round, deep or shallow – each pot gives a tree a different look."

Bob is also very particular about exactly how he displays his handiwork. "I always try to achieve a pleasing mix of colours, needle textures and shapes in each distinct area, so it's not just the bonsai that impresses but also the layout." >

THIS PAGE A trio of elevated *Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana' underplanted with Spanish shawl.
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Bob named this Japanese black pine "Hobson" after the student who passed it on to him. A Chinese juniper shaped in a striking Japanese style, with a blue spruce to the right. Bob takes care to ensure that his bonsai specimens are arranged in a visually pleasing manner.

(Clockwise from top left) The stone pagoda has a waterfall behind it and bromeliads to the right. The Japanese black pine in the rectangular white planter is broom-style bonsai. Simon holds an 18-year-old ivy bonsai.

Within the garden, gravel paths, bamboo walls, stone lanterns and a green tea hedge conspire first to hide, then to gradually reveal, the carefully composed vistas.

Most small gardens have room for only one or two feature trees but a bewildering range of specimens – albeit pint-sized – thrive here, including Californian redwood, liquidambar, pagoda trees, Japanese maple and a plethora of pines. Bob can pick full-sized granny smith and golden delicious apples from his miniature fruit trees. Appearances can be deceptive though, and what might look and feel exactly like a head of bright green broccoli is, in fact, a slow-growing false cypress.

Strategically placed driftwood fastened on with screws and nails is sometimes used to make a specimen look older than it is. The illusion of a tiny *Podocarpus totara* forest has been achieved by a technique called raft planting, which involves planting a tree horizontally in its tub so that its branches rise up vertically.

Bob shares this lilliputian world of trees with his partner, Simon Misdale, an award-winning manufacturing jeweller and one of Bob's full-time bonsai students.

When he's not clipping trees, Bob practises holistic healing and reflexology and he likes to manage his plants with the same wholesome philosophy. "My entire garden is built on nature's energy. There are no artificial fertilisers or high-powered sprays here. I control pests with potions I make from garlic, rhubarb leaves and seaweed. Nature is a wonderful teacher – every day I learn something new about my plants."

See more at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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THIS PAGE Rosie and Mark Belton enjoy their Ribbonwood garden from the dining terrace. **OPPOSITE** Old bearded irises border a path with aquilegia and other dainty perennials.

After Monet

A French-inspired Governors Bay garden has played a creative and therapeutic role in the lives of its owners

WORDS ADRIENNE REWI / **PHOTOGRAPHS** JULIET NICHOLAS

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) An avenue of birch trees leads into the bottom section of the hillside garden. The rose 'Mutabilis' tumbles over the rear of the vegetable garden. A shady vantage point from which to enjoy the garden. White Dutch irises 'Casa Blanca' and 'White Venus' in the iris walk.

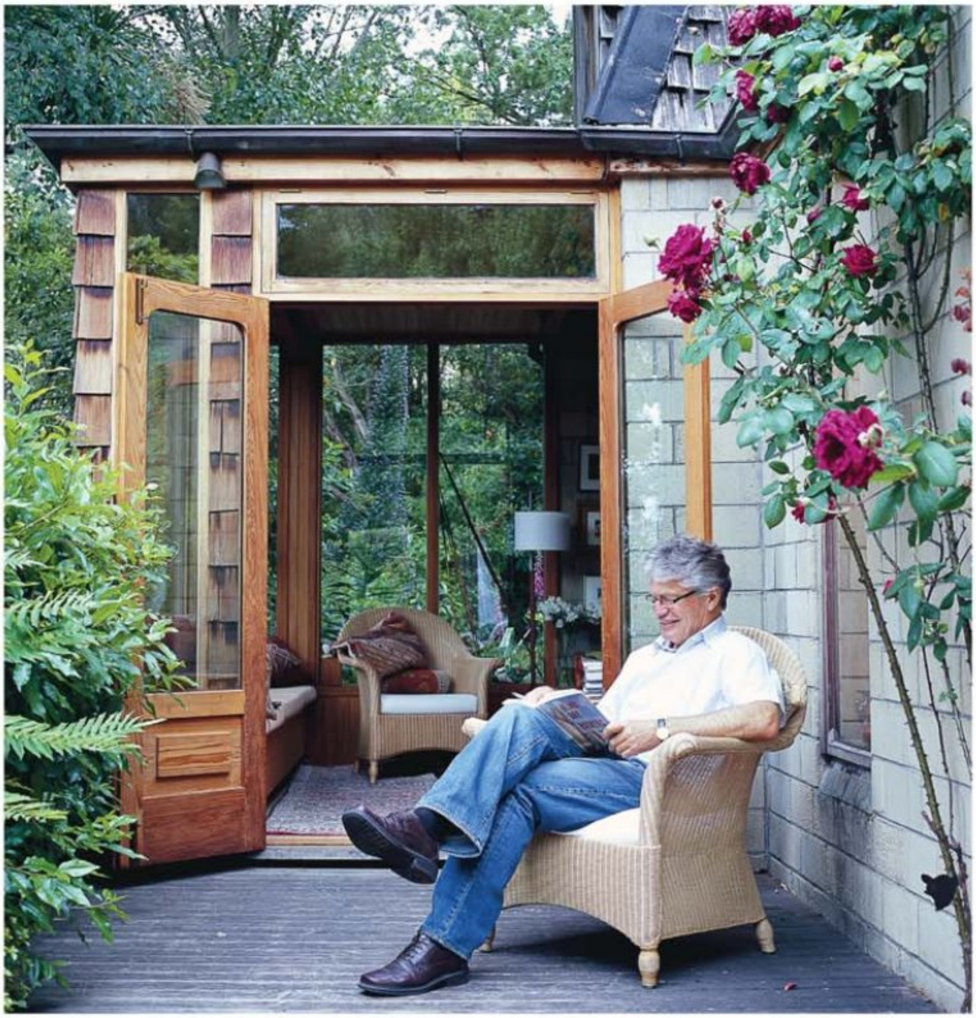
Ribbonwood is a rambling, romantic beauty of a garden that pays homage to colour, texture, pattern and scent. Over 30 years, it has expanded and changed as its owners, Mark and Rosie Belton of Governors Bay, near Christchurch, have given life to their creative inspirations – and in the last five years the garden has also played a significant role in Rosie Belton's recovery from serious injury.

A series of terraces cut into a sloping hillside, Ribbonwood is structured without being restricted, free without being untidy. "I've never been a really tidy person in the garden," says Rosie. "It used to worry me but now I appreciate that, for me, a garden is about colour, texture, scent and beauty. I don't plan rigidly. I prefer to let things just happen – like a painting. I like the surprises that come with that. What has mattered to me is making a garden that brings me joy and that changes with the seasons."

When Mark and Rosie first purchased their 0.4ha site, it was bare but for a single poplar tree. The first new tree they planted was a ribbonwood from their previous garden, for which the property is named. The terraces had been shaped by previous landowners and that determined their underlying garden structure.

"There is always a temptation to level things but we let it be and the garden has a more interesting layout as a result," says Rosie. >

The Beltons' home sits on a flat plateau overlooking the romantic garden, which falls away on all sides.



"I like having something startling and completely unexpected in the garden"

THIS PAGE Mark relaxes with a book; the rose above his chair is 'Souvenir du Dr Jamain'. Artichokes are among the vegetables grown in this fertile garden. **OPPOSITE** Mark and Rosie's grandchildren, Sophia Rose, 10 (in blue), and Lili, five (in yellow), love playing among the romantic flower beds; Rosie Belton is pictured at top right.

From the outset, Mark took care of the structural elements – the pathways, rock walls and terraces, the summer house and pergolas and the native plantings. An international forestry expert by profession, he has always taken particular pride in the flourishing stands of assorted natives – everything from manuka and ake ake to kowhai, ribbonwood, lemonwood and olearia hedging – all of which have attracted rich bird life to the garden.

Rosie, meanwhile, has created the remainder of the garden, very much inspired by the English style of gardeners such as Vita Sackville-West and by the calm French beauty of the painter Monet's garden in Giverny.

"After a number of visits, France has become my great love and I've been to Monet's garden three times. Our climate is similar to Giverny's, so I've been able to copy a lot of their plantings. What I love about Monet's garden are the artistic intentions behind the plantings and the intimate nature of the garden," she says.

"It's not a huge garden but it has an enormous richness and he was happy to let the plants have their freedom. That's been my approach here. I love a wild mix of colours and the accidents that happen. I like having something startling and completely unexpected in the garden."

And so it is that Rosie's archways billow with a mix of exotic clematis, white wisteria, scented roses and 'Doyenne du Comice' pears. The iris walk is also home to a pretty tangle of aquilegia, 'Black Parrot' tulips, rhododendrons and forget-me-nots; white daisies and azaleas burst into spring colour with their toes surrounded by bluebells and wild daisies.

Old roses have clambered to the tops of trees and dwarf apple trees happily keep company with roses, lavender, lilies, lupins and borage. The colourful perennial border is overhung with flowering cherries and filled with blooms for every season – from tulips and narcissus to delphiniums, irises, lilies and aquilegias bought as seed in France. >

The rose 'Bantry Bay' and a white pillar rose soften the lines of the summer house. The iris walk mixes different varieties of iris with daisies, forget-me-nots and rhododendrons.

At the top of the garden, a bountiful orchard is home to old-fashioned varieties of fruits that Rosie puts to good use in the kitchen. More than 120 rose varieties – multi-coloured and richly scented – are planted beside the vegetable beds and currant bushes.

The garden has been planned to provide different sitting and entertaining areas, each protected from the prevailing winds and, over the last five years, it has had a particularly special place in Rosie's life.

In 2004, in the middle of a busy professional and family life, Rosie was dancing outdoors at a wedding when her silk skirt snagged on a garden tap and she fell and hit her head. Five weeks later she underwent the first of two surgeries to relieve the subdural bleeds. The road to recovery after the injury and resulting surgeries has been harder than she could have imagined, Rosie says. Her book, *Just a Bang on the Head,* was published last year and describes the devastation a head injury wreaks.

"I used to spend a huge amount of time working in the garden but I'm much more restricted now. When I couldn't get out and about, I lay in the window seat working out the plantings for the iris walkway and my trusted friend, Gary Kennard, who has helped me in the garden for 13 years, put my plans into action. He's always been very sensitive to this garden, so I knew it was in safe hands.

"I still enjoy the garden immensely. I walk around it every day and it's played a huge part in my recovery," says Rosie. "I always loved my grandmother's garden and seeing my grandchildren playing in our garden makes all the hard work seem worthwhile. More than ever, the garden is a place of peace for Mark and me – we never tire of coming home to it."

To go into the draw for one of 10 copies of Rosie Belton's book, Just a Bang on the Head, see nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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Down to earth

It's been 70 years since plant retailer Keith Lowe left China en route for California – California, Wellington, that is

WORDS GORDON COLLIER / **PHOTOGRAPHS** PAUL McCREDIE

JUST BEFORE THE Japanese invasion of China in 1939, a small Cantonese boy left the village where he was born, about 130 kilometres from Hong Kong, and migrated to far-off New Zealand, where members of his family had established a market garden at Gisborne.

That small boy is now 83 years old with a New Zealand name, Keith Lowe, and a string of national, civic and industry honours and awards, including an MNZM (Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit) for outstanding services to horticulture and the community. Keith founded and, with his family, owns the famous California Home and Garden Centre in Miramar, winner of the inaugural NZ Garden Centre of the Year award in 1996 and named as Wellington's Top Shop in 1997.

THIS PAGE Keith Lowe in the bonsai display at the nursery he's owned for 35 years. The homewares showroom and cafe are housed in a former gas tank painted pink. **OPPOSITE** Semi-retired Keith is patron of the national and the Wellington bonsai societies. There's always time to advise a customer on the ancient art.

Looking back from such heights, it's hard to imagine the difficulties confronting the young Keith, then known as Kwai Ock, when he landed in New Zealand with little education and speaking no English. He spent his first night with a relative – ironically enough in Miramar – and was bundled off next morning on a Newmans bus to Gisborne to cultivate potatoes. At the local school, Kwai Ock was befriended by a seven-year-old whose name, Keith, also began with the letter K. And that was how he chose his New Zealand name.

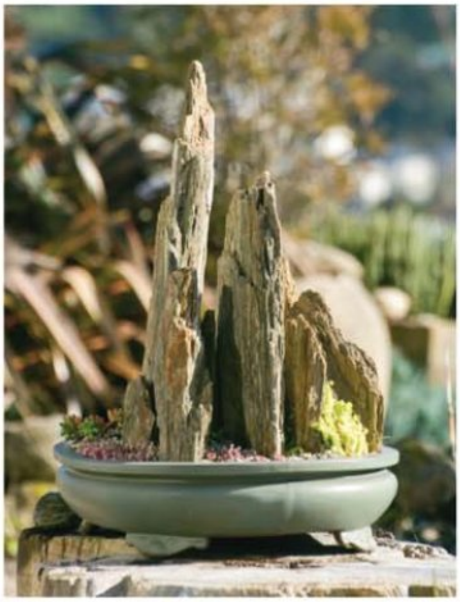
Life took another turn when his father, who – lured by gold – had himself migrated to New Zealand in the 1880s, advised him to go back to Wellington where there were more Chinese people. Those were the days of the highly discriminatory government poll tax of £100 for each Chinese immigrant. "It was the best £100 my father ever spent on me," says Keith. "I've got no problems with it. I have been very lucky."

His father later bought Keith a shop in Lambton Quay with a 3.6-metre frontage that was just 7.3 metres deep – an alleyway really. It was a fruit and vege shop but, "I always liked plants so I soon chucked the veges out and bought in pot plants from Andersons and Duncan & Davies. That's how I got into plants." About this time Keith married Linda, a New Zealand-born Chinese. They were to have five children and, in the early days, Keith says they often only just managed to make ends meet.

When the rent on such a prime site became too high, Keith and Linda took a gamble and moved to Miramar, where they rented some ground from Neil Blundell of the *Evening Post* newspaper, who used it for storing paper.

"People said I was mad but he gave me free rental for 12 months and after that a really good deal. I started outside, using packing cases for a counter and put up a parasol over the cash register when it rained. One hundred bales of straw made a good windbreak but, by the time I got to the bottom row, the field mice were running out. Six years later I bought the whole place from the *Evening Post*. We have been here 35 years now."

Keith and his family have worked long and hard but, he says, "I have had tremendous help from people in the industry. I have been blessed. Barry, my eldest son, is now running the business or I would have sold out years ago – he's educated and a better businessman than me. I've given all my shares to the family." >



Keith works on the delicate art of bonsai, shaping a variety of species that include juniper (top left), picea (middle left), cedar (lower left) and prostrate kowhai (lower right) into miniature trees that demonstrate his levels of skill and patience.

"My second son, Jeff, is a doctor in Karori," says Keith. In fact, between them the extended Lowe family can boast about "half a dozen doctors, an orthodontist, two dentists and an optician scattered all over New Zealand, Australia and America".

Fashions change all the time in the industry, says Keith, which can be challenging but the Lowes have established another garden centre in Lower Hutt where other garden centres have closed down. Linda drives herself out to the Hutt every Friday to do the office work.

Meanwhile, the Miramar branch – known affectionately as "the tank" by the locals because of its distinctive showroom built from a three-storey-high former gas tank – now houses an extensive range of homewares and a family-managed cafe that does a roaring trade.

Keith's eldest daughter, Barbara, looks after the office and Wendy, his youngest daughter, is the homewares buyer. Tina, the middle daughter, also used to work at the garden centre but has gone on to other things.

The business carries a huge range of plants and garden accessories and enjoys a special relationship with suppliers and customers alike. Every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, Keith can be found in his corner at the centre's bonsai station. "Bonsai is what I come down for and I give the customers help. One day I got three hugs from grateful lady customers," he says with a shy smile.

People still like their gardens, he thinks, though they don't really like gardening. "They want hard landscaping and instant plants."

One has the feeling Keith Lowe will be down at the California for a long time yet. ■

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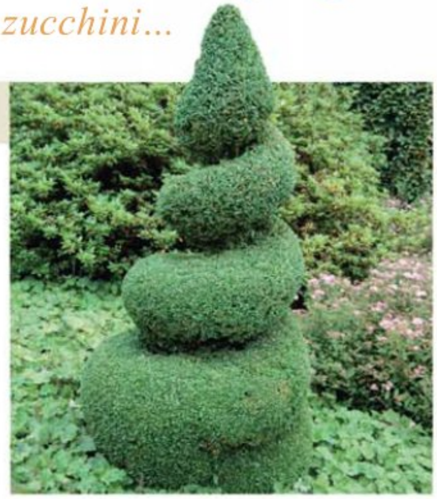
Cuttings

Snippets of news from the gardening scene

GOING FOR GOLD

Spring is here – at least officially – and what better way to celebrate than with daffodils? Visit The National Daffodil Society's website *daffodil.org.nz* for events nationwide. If you're in Christchurch, get along to the Combined Spring Show at the Canterbury Horticultural Centre, Hagley Park South (September 19 and 20, Saturday 1-5pm, Sunday 10am-4pm) for a splendid daffodil display and also alpine and rock-garden plants, early-flowering rhododendrons, species and hybrids and magnificent miniature bulbs.



EDIBLE WEEDS

Reader Margaret Paterson notes that, despite parching summers, the weeds in her South Australian garden flourish. "What if we could harvest them for salads?" she asks. "Not a silly idea," says Carmel Hare, a New Zealand authority on edible weeds. She suggests a tempting weed salad could include dandelion, sorrel, chervil, fennel, calendula, thistle stems and leaves, mallow, lemon balm, violets and wild onions. *A Field Guide to the Native Edible Plants of New Zealand* (Penguin, 2004) by Andrew Crowe will help with the identification.

KEEPING UP THE GARDEN PATH

Now's the time to spring-clean your garden paths and patio: sweep and hose or even waterblast concrete areas and use a moss killer if necessary. It'll make your garden look sharper and, more importantly, will make it safer. ACC reports that last year 125,000 people were injured in their gardens and the most common cause was falls on paths, patios and driveways. Other garden-safety tips from ACC include maintaining and tidying away tools, filling in post holes and cutting back overhanging trees.

Salad days are coming: now's the time to plant beetroot, capsicums, onions, silverbeet, asparagus crowns, broccoli, cabbage, zucchini...

HOW TO: ACHIEVE THE PERFECT TOPIARY PLANT

Choose a plant with a straight stem and dense foliage. Good choices are *Buxus sempervirens,* the fast-growing *Lonicera nitida, Ficus benjamina,* lillypilly, rosemary, gardenia and *Genista* 'Yellow Imp'.
If you're growing a plant from scratch, stake the stem. When it reaches the desired height, begin to clip the foliage into shape and maintain it as it grows. Make precise, accurate cuts with sharp clippers. Stand back often to see how you're going – and take your time.

To create a ball, use an upturned hanging basket and clip around it. For cubes and spheres, you're better off clipping by hand. For larger plants, such as established camellias, use a hula hoop as a guide. To create a cone, stand over the plant if possible and look down, keeping the stem in the middle and using hedge clippers to cut even, straight edges. For more inspiration on topiary shapes and plants, visit the website of topiary expert Claudia Gorringe, topiaryplants.co.nz.

SYBILLE HETET (LETTUCE); DOREEN MEAR (SPRING SHOW); ISTOCKPHOTO (TOPIARY)

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TAPS PP7165

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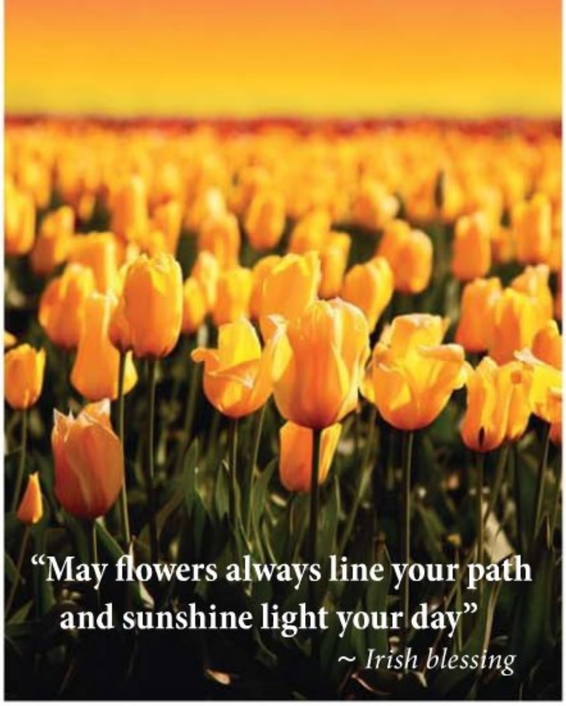

WE CAN'T RESIST...

Spring flowers – tulips, daffodils, freesias and jonquils – are the sunniest flowers around. Le Sac plastic **vase** $27 from Alfresco, (09) 309 3643.

CLEAN SWEEP

Treat yourself to some style when you're doing the cleaning up. Normann Copenhagen **dustpan** and **brush** set $58 from Design Denmark, (09) 361 3333.

Golden days

Our pick of garden-themed goodies

WORDS TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BELINDA MERRIE

Exterior furniture that works well inside and out gets the nod from us. Milano occasional **table** $730 from Akali, (09) 300 9404.

A FRESH SLANT

Potted herbs make a great kitchen display. This stand by Danish designer Lovorika Banovic is clean and contemporary and its simplicity means it should fit well in any kitchen, modern or traditional. Ceramic **herb ladder** $99 from Design Denmark, (09) 361 3333.

Remind yourself of warmer temperatures with this sunny orange **planter** or orchid bowl $119 from Tully & Gardener, (09) 360 7576.

BRING ON THE SUN...

Globe candle $42 from Alfresco, (09) 309 3643.

FIVE OF THE BEST... *super sunscreens*

Neutrogena Age Shield Face Sunblock with helioplex SPF70 $22.95.

L'Oreal Paris Solar Expertise Anti-Ageing Collagen Protector SPF50+ $23.99.

True Solutions Baby Face SPF15 $50.

Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream Sun Defense for Face SPF50 $38.

Hissyfit Body Double Sunscreen SPF30 $59.

TULIP PICTURE: SHERRI CAMP/DREAMSTIME

WITH ITS NEW LED televisions – the first in New Zealand – Samsung has reset the standard for home entertainment with ultra-slim design, exceptional viewing quality and improved energy efficiency.

Less is more

At a super slim 29mm, Samsung LEDs are 70 per cent slimmer than previous models. This svelte design, together with an ultra-slim wall mount, means that they can literally hang like a picture. So, even when they're switched off, the sleek, simple, pared-back design can deliver viewing pleasure.

Seeing is believing

The new Samsung LEDs will change the way you see television. The innovative use of light-emitting diodes rather than cold cathode fluorescent lamps achieves ultra-high contrast ratios, resulting in rich, vivid colours, clearer images and deeper, more authentic blacks. What was once considered to be a good contrast ratio (somewhere around 15,000:1) pales beside Samsung's new LED technology, which delivers contrast ratios of up to 3,000,000:1.

Energy efficiency

New Samsung LEDs reduce power usage to new lows. In fact, they consume 40 per cent less power than traditional LCD HDTVs of a similar size. This energy efficiency, combined with futuristic display technologies and innovative design, is made possible only by Samsung's groundbreaking use of LED technology. In other words, it's an entirely new species of television.

To see Samsung's incredible evolution of technology for yourself, visit any leading-edge electronics retailer or go to samsung.co.nz.

WIN

A 40-INCH SAMSUNG LED TV WORTH $4999

To go into the draw to win one of Samsung's stunning new 40" LED TVs worth $4999, simply answer the following question:

How slim is the new Samsung LED TV?

Write your name, address and daytime phone number on the back of an envelope and send to:

Samsung LED TV Promotion,
PO Box 105 301, Auckland 1143.

Or go to samsung.co.nz to enter online.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Employees and families of Samsung Electronics New Zealand and Fairfax and their associated companies are not eligible to enter. All entries will be opened and the first entry picked at random will win. The judge's decision is final and the prize is not redeemable for cash. Prize is one Samsung 40" LED TV valued at $4999. Competition closes September 21, 2009.

A whole new
SPECIES
Witness television's next great leap forward with
the revolutionary new Samsung LED TV range
SAMSUNG
SAMSUNG

Win opera tickets

Enter to win tickets to Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin

NZ House & Garden has 20 prize packages to give away to the NBR New Zealand Opera's Genesis Energy season of *Eugene Onegin* in Auckland (Tuesday, September 22) and Wellington (Tuesday, October 13). Each prize package includes a gold double pass, a programme and interval drinks and is valued at $350.

Honour, love, death and regret – these are the themes of Tchaikovsky's great opera, *Eugene Onegin*. Set in 19th century Russia and based on Alexander Pushkin's novel, *Eugene Onegin* has all the opulence of the era and packs a dramatic and visual punch.

A dynamic national and international cast and creative team have been secured to deliver an unforgettable night at the opera. New Zealand soprano Anna Leese stars as Tatyana, making her debut with the NBR New Zealand Opera. Alongside her in the title role is the UK's William Dazeley, one of the leading baritones of his generation. And, from his base at the Kirov Ballet's Mariinsky Theatre, in St Petersburg, acclaimed Russian conductor Alexander Polianichko takes the podium.

AUCKLAND

Aotea Centre, THE EDGE®
Sept 17, 19, 22, 24 and 26

Bookings: The Edge box office, (09) 357 3355 or www.the-edge.co.nz

WELLINGTON

St James Theatre
Oct 10, 13, 15 and 17

Bookings: Ticketek outlets nationwide, 0800 TICKETEK (0800 842 538) or www.ticketek.co.nz

HOW TO ENTER

Write your name, address, daytime phone number and choice of city on the back of an envelope and send to:

NZ Opera promotion
NZ House & Garden
PO Box 5317, Wellesley St
Auckland 1141

Entries must be received before September 20. The winners will be sent a double pass to the address on the envelope.

NBR | NEW ZEALAND OPERA

The Genesis Energy Season of EUGENE ONEGIN

NZ HOUSE & GARDEN

Well stacked

Introducing our new series on simple floral arrangements you can create at home

WORDS & STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **CONCEPT** DAVINA PRANKERD / **PHOTOGRAPH** BELINDA MERRIE

Good design is often very simple. This can be especially true when it comes to floral arrangements. Try this easy arrangement using three types of flowers and differently sized fishbowl vases that fit to make a stable stack. (Similar vases are available at florists and homeware stores.)

- For the base, arrange kale flowers on top of each other in a 35cm glass bowl. Kale flowers work well because of their weighty stems.
- Wind tulips around the inside of a 25cm bowl; bendy stems are essential, so you could also use calla lilies or anthuriums.
- In a 15cm vase, place one lovely bloom; we've used a perfect Casablanca lily.

This arrangement should last about a week, especially if you use a minimum of water (the tulip blooms don't like being submerged) and top it up every other day or so. A touch of household bleach will help keep the water clear.

Cover story

Sleep well knowing you're ahead of spring's latest bedlinen trends

WORDS SHELLEY BRIDGEMAN / **STYLING** CLAUDIA KOZUB / **PHOTOGRAPHS** JACKIE MEIRING

ABOVE Autumn Evening **pillowcase** $34.95, matching **cushion** $34.95 and Mocha **sheet** $49.95/set, all from Bed Bath N' Table; **orchid** in pot $39.50 and **books** POA from Tully & Gardener. OPPOSITE Top shelf, from left: terracotta **pots** from $12.50 from Tully & Gardener; **turtle-dove** $54 from Redcurrent; **bird house** $49.50 and glass **bottles** $14.50-$19.50, all from Tully & Gardener; second shelf, from left: glass **bottles** as before and **storage jars** $35 each from Tully & Gardener; Slate Euro **pillowcases** $90 each and Good Earth **tablecloth** $160, all from Anami; third shelf, from left: white **pot** $16.50 from Tully & Gardener; Urban striped **pillowcases** $85/pair from Thread; **throw** $190 and **pot** $22.50, both from Tully & Gardener; bottom shelf, from left: white **pot** $89 and **cockerel** $49, both from Tully & Gardener; Lavandou queen **throw** $595 from Anami; Lars large **quilt** $1949 from Cavit & Co. >

THIS PAGE Green Euro **pillowcases** $29.90 and Providence **pillowcases** $19.90 each, all from Wallace Cotton; floral Ralph Lauren **cushion** $495 from Cavit & Co; Gardenia queen **duvet cover** $229.95 from Sheridan; fitted **sheet** $44.95/set from Bed Bath N' Table; green **pot** $129 and **orchid** in pot $39.50, both from Tully & Gardener; other furniture and accessories privately owned.

OPPOSITE (far right, from top) Flower Girl **cushion** $60 and matching single **duvet** $220, both from Thread; Carlisle cotton **throw** (above duvet) $20, Norton **throw** $49.95 and mohair **throw** $149, all from Bed Bath N' Table; chair privately owned.

THEY SAY WHAT goes around comes around and the current crop of bedlinen proves the point. Top bedding styles this season echo those classic looks from our grandmothers' homes: botanicals, stripes, vintage-inspired and never-fail neutrals.

Naturally lovely

The great outdoors has come inside with a plethora of flowers, leaves, insects and birdlife starring on the latest bedlinen. From botanical prints to restrained and stylised embroidered motifs, there's an organic design to suit any decor.

A twisting pattern of vines and flowers is featured on Thread Design's Petals and Pods range and their Insideout collection stars diagonal clusters of leaves. Originally for children, their Flower Girl collection, featuring antique flowers and stripes, has proved so popular it's been extended for grown-ups.

The natural theme continues at Sheridan, where oversized blooms are rendered in an interplay of matt and lustre for the opulent Landseer bedding range. In the same vein, the Devereux cotton bedcover features an acanthus leaf motif. Watch out for the summery Bouquet and Gardenia designs, with delicate flowers on white backgrounds.

Wallace Cotton's Honesty hand-embroidered cushion depicts a cluster of cottage-garden flowers and the Indira applique cushion was inspired by a palm canopy in the rainforest. Thread Design have velvet cushions screenprinted with silver art deco interpretations of peacocks and flamingos and cushions featuring a single apple tree.

Earn your stripes

Stripes rarely go out of favour for duvet covers and they come in many guises: relaxed coastal, country, tailored urban and formal pinstripes. Year after year, versatile striped bedlinen earns a well-deserved place in our most stylish bedrooms. They're equally at home mixed with plain colours, floral designs or geometrics, and can be as contemporary or traditional as you'd like them to be.

Wallace Cotton's Paula Wallace believes bold striped patterns are best paired with plain colours. "But, if the stripe is fine and subtle, then feel free to dress it up with larger-scale florals or a couple of appliqued cushions," she says.

Thread Design offer a range of stripes in a cocktail of colours: Bellini (blue and beige), Bloody Mary (red and grey) and Gin Fizz (pink and orange). But, for stripes at their simplest, check out the Cosmopolitan collection – stripes don't come less complicated or more striking than in black and white. >

Grandma will be pleased to know that quilts are on the rise once more

Be nice to Nana

Grandma will be pleased to know that, after the recent unassailable dominance of the duvet, quilts are on the rise once more. All the major bedding houses are noting them as a key trend for the season. Quilts can be folded at the foot of the bed or play a starring role as the sole layer of warmth in a mild Kiwi summer.

Anami Textiles offer 100 per cent cotton hand-stitched quilts – often in a floral design, such as chrysanthemum. They are filled with cotton batting and have quilted pillow shams and Euro shams to match.

As well as the traditional embroidered quilts, watch for those featuring a deck-chair-style stripe. Thread have a natural linen version with channel quilting and 250g wool fill.

The design team at Wallace Cotton have embraced their inner Nana with the introduction of a multi-striped, crocheted cotton throw in aqua, hot pink, lime, purple and ecru. Drape it across a bed or chair for an instant hit of vintage.

Wallace Cotton have also introduced an old imperial print that Paula Wallace describes as a "large monotone botanical in a Raj kind of way", as well as paisley quilts and duvet covers. Watch, too, for treasures – such as sheets and pillowcases with cut-work embroidery trims – that are fit for an old-fashioned glory box. Thread's Chandelier collection centring on an antique chandelier is another nod to nostalgia. >

THIS PAGE Blue striped Ralph Lauren **cushion** (on chair) $325 from Cavit & Co; pink and gold cushion privately owned; Melon glass **decanter** (on table) $9.95 from Bed Bath & Beyond; **pots** and **orchids** from Tully & Gardener; on bed: small striped **cushion** $89.95, Bouquet Euro **pillowcase** $49.95 and standard **pillowcase** $39.95, queen **duvet cover** $229.95, striped **top sheet** $229.95, striped **fitted sheet** $178.95 and Parterre queen **coverlet** $499.95, all from Sheridan; other furniture and accessories privately owned.

OPPOSITE (far left) Charlotte pink **slippers** $59.90 and Mary Rose Euro **pillowcase** $29.90, all from Wallace Cotton; Lace queen **sheet set** $150 from Anami; green iron **side table** $390, **birds** $21.50, wicker **pots** $16.50 each, **plants** and **picture** $94.50, all from Tully & Gardener.

OPPOSITE (top right) Monarch ice blue queen **quilt** $660 and Moghul Flower **cushion** $75, both from Anami; **cot quilt** in natural linen $150 from Thread; Kora indigo/brown **throw** (underneath) $1795 from Cavit & Co; **pots** and **flowers** $12.50-$49.50 from Tully & Gardener.

THIS PAGE Picture $94.50 from Tully & Gardener; on ladder, top to bottom: linen **pillowcase** $85/pair and Olive leaf **pillowcase** $85/pair, both from Thread; gingham **pillowcase** (part of a set) $99.95/set from Sheridan; Matisse queen **duvet cover** $149 from Linen House; Carlisle cotton **throws** $20 each from Bed Bath N' Table; **urn** $398 and small **pot** $42.50, both from Tully & Gardener; ladder and green jug privately owned.

OPPOSITE Top shelf: glass storage **bottles** $35 and plant **pot** $42.50, all from Tully & Gardener; middle shelf: **bookend** $38 from Redcurrent; Verona queen **sheet set** $160 from Anami; Charlotte Botanicals queen **duvet set** $159.90 from Bed Bath & Beyond; black and cream flower **pot** $22 and **tealights** $9.50 each, all from Tully & Gardener; bottom shelf: cream and black flower **pot** $16 from Tully & Gardener; rabbit **doorstop** $43 from Redcurrent; Palmeraie Euro **pillowcase** $59.95 and Maddock queen bed **quilt cover** set $259.95, all from Sheridan; Grafica queen **quilt** $690 from Anami.

Colour it in

Pristine white linen has to be the epitome of timelessness and luxury. It's a classic look – plain but certainly never boring. Scalloped edges, satin piping and white-on-white embroidery add subtle yet significant detail.

Bedding in mellow hues such as alabaster, ivory, oyster and stone complements the neutral tones that form the backdrop of most New Zealand bedrooms and sepia tones quietly underscore the on-trend vintage flavour. Lift pale colours by introducing texture – a chunky knitted blanket, fringed mohair rug, coarsely woven linen or pin-tucked cushion.

Metallic highlights – copper, pewter, platinum and silver – add interest to otherwise unadorned textiles. Sheridan's Deluxe Living range, for example, uses platinum accents to invigorate classic black and white pairings.

Blue appears in many guises this season. Wallace Cotton has reintroduced its distinctive shade of greenish-blue, Seaglass. Watch, too, for Marine Blue, a strong colour that Paula Wallace says fits on the spectrum between royal and navy blue.

Blue and white is a never-fail colour combination – fresh and crisp, yet soothing and restful. And navy and stone, with its masculine and somewhat rustic undertone, is another tried and true colour duo that still has currency. ■

Count on it

Counting sheep may be an ancient remedy for insomnia but insiders say that, in fact, counting threads is a sure-fire way to a restful sleep. When it comes to bedlinen, the term "thread count" is often bandied about, yet it's sometimes misunderstood. Thread count refers to the fabric's weave density. The higher the thread count, the softer the fabric and the less likely it is to shrink. However, we recommend checking the fine print on the packaging when comparing thread counts. It's standard in the industry to express thread count per square inch but some ranges may quote thread count per 10 square centimetres which, of course, gives an elevated rating. Thread Design's cotton sheets have a thread count of 300 per square inch; this gives a crisp feel, similar to that of the linen used in upmarket hotels. Technical details aside, bedlinen is all about personal preference – so, if it feels right, buy it.

Fill it up

Duvets may be filled with polyester, cotton, wool or a mix of feather and down. The filling is significant; it determines the level of warmth, the applications it is most suited for and even the price. Polyester is the classic recession filling: it's certainly not top of the range but it does come cheaply. Cotton provides light, summer-weight warmth. Wool is the option for those with allergies who sneeze at the mere mention of feathers. Feather and down may come from either ducks or geese; the higher the percentage of down, the warmer the duvet will be.

STOCKISTS

Anami Textiles Ltd	(09) 307 1593	Redcurrent	(09) 520 5452
Bed Bath & Beyond	(09) 522 8366	Sheridan	0800 100 137
Bed Bath N' Table	(09) 523 3715	Thread Design	0800 847 323
Cavit & Co Ltd	(09) 358 3771	Tully & Gardener	(09) 360 7576
Linen House	(09) 478 4999	Wallace Cotton	0800 222 122

sweet dreams

What's happening in the bedroom?

Create an indulgent summertime haven with designs from Sheridan's new season's collection, in stores from September (Molyneaux-Champagne featured). To launch the new range, **Sheridan** is offering *NZ House & Garden* readers $100 off their favourite Sheridan sheets with purchases over $300. See instore for terms and conditions. Call (09) 376 7665 for participating stores, sheridan.com.au.

Frette Italian bedlinen is renowned as the finest in the world. Made of 100% long-fibre Egyptian cotton, cashmere and silks, this season's collection draws inspiration from exotic Istanbul. Affordable luxury, available exclusively from **Cavit & Co**, 547a Parnell Rd, Auckland, (09) 358 3771, cavitco.com.

Premium quality, 100% natural bedlinen from **New Zealand Nature**. Duvet and sheet sets with 50% eco-friendly bamboo and 50% cotton blend; cool in summer and warm in winter. From $129; 0800 771 133, nznature.co.nz.

Ligne Roset Lumeo, by Peter Maly, is made in France for beautiful living. This functional wardrobe can be equipped with a chest of drawers, shelves, hanging rails, trouser and tie racks, lights and a mirror. Colours: white lacquer, dark brown or ebony oak with aluminium lacquer detail. Available exclusively at **Domo**, Auckland, (09) 921 5574; Christchurch, (03) 379 8818.

Grange offers you genuine French furniture, found in homes worldwide, wherever the art de vivre is celebrated. Various periods of French history are represented in the collection, including Directoire, Rochambeau and Louis-Philippe, as well as a Vintage collection. Grange also manufactures informal collections in rattan and metal, completing a range suitable for town and country homes, formal and informal. A wide selection of modular units that can be adapted to suit your requirements for the bedroom, living room and home office is also on offer. Available exclusively at **Domo** in late October: Auckland, (09) 921 5574; Christchurch, (03) 379 8818.

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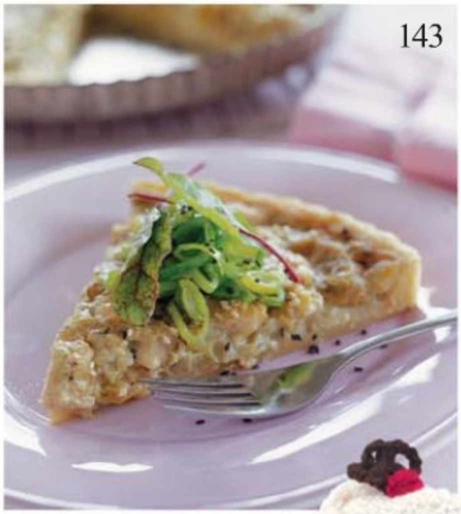
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Menu

Lime & Ginger Pork Satays
Prawn & Golden Kumara Fishcakes
Orzo Salad with Feta & Asparagus
Smoked Chicken & Bacon Clubs
Quick Caramel Macaroons
Vanilla Cake with Berry Cream & Rosewater Frosting

Birthday honours

Celebrate another year with a ladylike lunch and birthday cake

RECIPES JO WILCOX / **STYLING** CLAUDIA KOZUB / **PHOTOGRAPHS** MELANIE JENKINS

Party plan

2 days ahead: Bake macaroons.
1 day ahead: Make pasta salad and dressing (do not combine). Cook fishcakes. Mix pork with satay ingredients. Bake cake (but don't fill or ice). Prepare butter and bacon filling for sandwiches.
On the day: Assemble and decorate cake. Make sandwiches.
Close to serving: Mix dressing into salad. Reheat fishcakes. Bake pork satays. Slice sandwiches.

Lime and Ginger Pork Satays

Baking these in the oven prevents the satay coating from burning, however they can be cooked in a frypan on the stove if preferred.

2 large pork fillets
About 16 bamboo skewers
Lime wedges for serving
Satay coating:
1 cup honey-roasted peanuts
2 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 teaspoon crushed garlic
1 teaspoon minced ginger
1 lime, juice and finely grated zest
1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Trim pork of any sinew and cut flesh into bite-sized pieces.

Place satay ingredients in a food processor and blend to a coarse paste. Combine with pork and marinate for at least 2 hours or overnight in the fridge. Place skewers in water to soak.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Thread 3 or 4 pork pieces on to each skewer and place on a lined baking tray. Bake for 8-12 minutes, turning once, until cooked through. Serve hot with lime wedges for squeezing. *Makes about 16*

Prawn and Golden Kumara Fishcakes

If you plan to make these ahead of time it is best to cook the mixture rather than let it sit, as the kumara can discolour. The cooked fishcakes can be reheated in the oven or microwave.

300g raw white fish
200g raw prawn meat
1 small onion, coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon minced ginger
1 teaspoon crushed garlic
2 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
1 egg
2 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons chopped coriander
1 cup grated golden kumara
(about 1 small kumara)
About ¼ cup neutral oil
To serve: sour cream, extra sweet chilli sauce and coriander

Place fish, prawn meat and onion in a food processor and mix until finely chopped. Add ginger, garlic, sweet chilli sauce and egg and process until well blended. Transfer to a bowl and mix in flour, coriander and kumara, seasoning well with salt and pepper.

Heat oil in a heavy-based pan and shallow-fry flattened spoonfuls of fish mixture for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden. Keep warm while cooking remaining mixture.

Serve fishcakes in stacks with sour cream and a drizzle of sweet chilli and coriander to garnish. *Makes 18-24*

Orzo Salad with Feta and Asparagus

This colourful pasta salad is delicious, whether the orzo (rice-shaped pasta) is warm or cold.

1½ cups orzo or risoni pasta
½ cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes
½ cup roasted red peppers
½ cup sliced black olives
½ cup diced red onion
½ cup toasted pine nuts
½ cup shredded basil leaves
½ cup crumbled feta
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and blanched then finely sliced on an angle
Dressing:
½ cup lemon-infused olive oil
1 tablespoon liquid honey
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

Cook orzo in plenty of boiling salted water until just tender, 8-10 minutes. Drain and refresh under cold water.

Combine remaining salad ingredients in a large bowl and toss gently with the warm or cooled orzo. Stir through the dressing 5 minutes before serving.

Dressing: Place oil, honey and vinegar in a lidded jar, season with salt and pepper and shake well. *Serves 8-10* >

Orzo Salad with Feta and Asparagus

Lime and Ginger Pork Satays

Prawn and Golden Kumara Fishcakes

Smoked Chicken and Bacon Clubs

Use the freshest bread you can find for these scrumptious layered sandwiches.

50g butter
½ cup chopped cooked bacon (2-3 rashers)
125g spreadable cream cheese
2 teaspoons wholegrain mustard
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon honey
18 slices sandwich-cut white bread
12 slices shaved smoked chicken
2-3 tablespoons aioli or mayonnaise
1 cup baby spinach leaves
1 cup cress

Soften butter and mix with salt and pepper to taste. Combine bacon, cream cheese, mustard, lemon zest and honey.

To assemble sandwiches, generously butter 6 slices of bread. Top each slice with shaved chicken then spread with aioli and cover with spinach leaves. Top with another buttered slice of bread, generously spread over cream cheese mixture and arrange cress on top. Butter the last 6 slices and place butter side down on each stack. Cover and chill sandwiches for at least 30 minutes.

Using a serrated knife, cut crusts off all sides of each stacked sandwich then cut each sandwich into 3 fingers. Arrange on serving plates and garnish with extra cress. *Makes 18*

Quick Caramel Macaroons

These are very easy to make – and very hard not to devour. If your supermarket doesn't stock shredded coconut, use a mixture of desiccated coconut and coconut thread.

380g can caramel condensed milk
3½ cups shredded coconut
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 170°C. Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl until mixture clumps together. Place small spoonfuls of mixture in mounds on lined trays and bake 12-15 minutes until golden and set. Cool and store in an airtight container in the fridge. Dust with icing sugar to serve. (If macaroons soften in storage, bake them again for 5-10 minutes close to serving.) *Makes about 45*

Vanilla Cake with Berry Cream and Rosewater Frosting

We used sugared pansies for decoration. To make these, gently brush the flowers with beaten egg white then sprinkle with caster sugar. Leave them to dry for 5 minutes before placing on the cake.

230g butter, softened
250g sugar
2 eggs
125g light sour cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
200g flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
70g ground almonds
Filling:
1 cup cream, softly whipped
1 cup berries, eg raspberries, blueberries, boysenberries (fresh or frozen, thawed and drained)
Frosting:
150g butter, softened
3 cups icing sugar
2 teaspoons rosewater
2-3 tablespoons hot water

Preheat oven to 170°C. Grease and line a 23cm springform cake pan.

Cream butter and sugar until pale and creamy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in sour cream and vanilla. Fold in sifted flour and baking powder then almonds.

Spoon mixture into prepared pan and smooth top. Bake until cake has risen and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in pan for 5-10 minutes before turning out on to a rack to cool completely.

Cut cake into 3 layers and sandwich with whipped cream and berries. Chill while frosting is prepared.

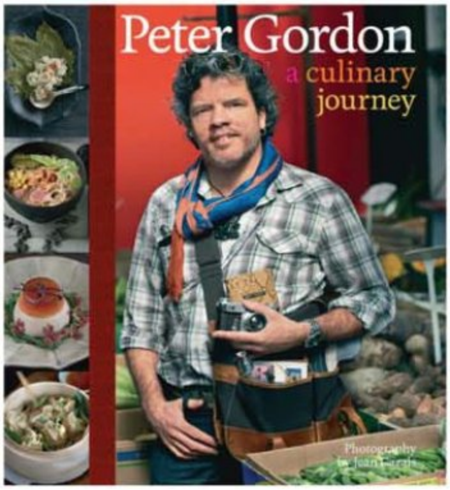
Frosting: Beat butter until pale and fluffy. Gradually add icing sugar, ¼ cup at a time, beating well. Add rosewater and enough hot water to make a smooth, spreadable frosting. Smooth a thin layer all over the cake to ensure there are no crumbs then decorate with a final layer of frosting. Assembled cake will keep for 1-2 days in the fridge. *Serves 10-12*

Photographed at Bracu Restaurant on Simunovich Olive Estate, Auckland, (09) 236 1030. Clothes from Kookai, (09) 815 9303; paper cupcake holders from Epicure Trading, (09) 524 0906; fabric for napkins and place mats from Spotlight; orchids from National Flowers Promotion Group; pansies from Kings Plant Barn, (09) 846 2141; purple vase, glass bowls, wine glasses, platters and cutlery from Living & Giving, 0800 548 464; plates, coloured water bottles and oil pourer from Stevens, (09) 846 7527; other items stylist's own.

Vanilla Cake with Berry Cream and Rosewater Frosting

Quick Caramel Macaroons

Smoked Chicken and Bacon Clubs



Join NZ House & Garden for lunch

with acclaimed chef Peter Gordon and editor Kate Coughlan

IMAGE FROM *PETER GORDON: A CULINARY JOURNEY*

PETER GORDON has inspired *NZ House & Garden* readers with his delectable recipes for many years and now, to mark the release of his sixth book, *Peter Gordon: A Culinary Journey*, we would like you to join us for lunch with Peter and special guest, world-renowned photographer Jean Cazals.

Listen to Peter Gordon discuss his new book, his travels and his long-time connection with *NZ House & Garden* over a three-course lunch, with matching wines, prepared from recipes found in *Peter Gordon: A Culinary Journey*.

Tickets are allocated on a first-in, first-served basis. Signed copies of Peter Gordon: A Culinary Journey will be available for sale at each event.

AUCKLAND
dine by Peter Gordon, SkyCity Grand Hotel
Monday October 5 and Tuesday October 6, 12.30–2.30pm
Cost: $75 per person
To book contact: Sarah McDonald, (09) 363 7039 or email sarah.mcdonald@skycity.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH
Canterbury Tales Restaurant, Crowne Plaza
Wednesday October 7, 12.30–2.30pm
Cost: $75 per person
To book contact: Michelle Hodge, (03) 371 0716 or email execsec@crowneplazachristchurch.co.nz

WELLINGTON *Shed 5*
Thursday October 8, 12.30–2.30pm
Cost: $65 per person, $95 with matching wines
To book contact: Astrid Cottereau, (04) 916 4235 or email astrid@shed5.co.nz

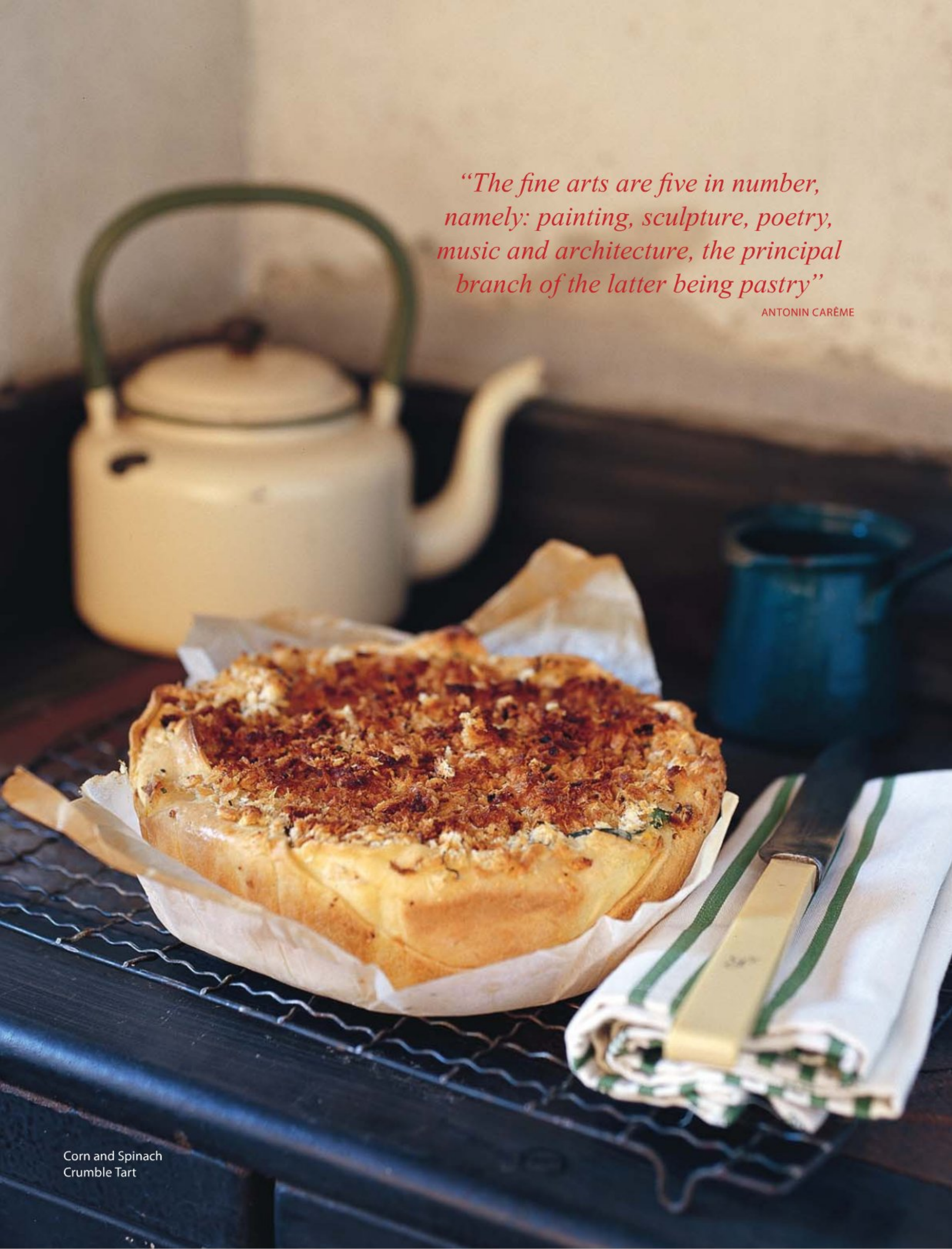
Nice as pie

These scrumptious pies and tarts from our "best-loved" files are sure to win hearts

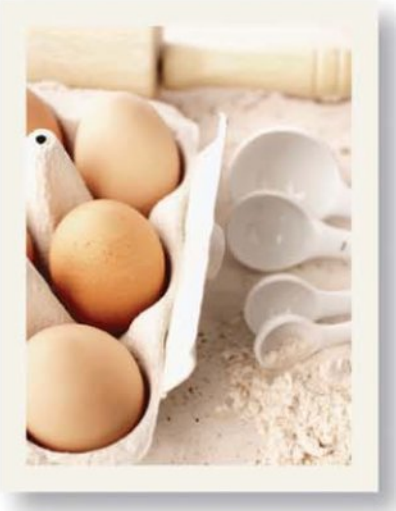
Beef, Mushroom and Red Wine Pie

"The fine arts are five in number, namely: painting, sculpture, poetry, music and architecture, the principal branch of the latter being pastry"

ANTONIN CARÊME



Corn and Spinach
Crumble Tart



EGGS AND FLOUR: GETTY IMAGES; HANDS WITH ROLLING PIN: ANGIE NORWOOD BROWNE/GETTY IMAGES

Corn and Spinach Crumble Tart

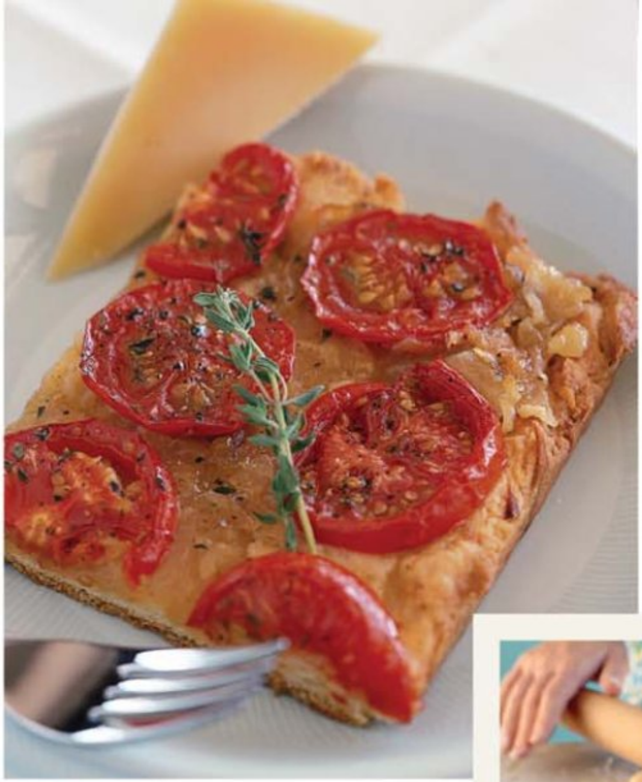
A crumble topping flavoured with garlic, sage and chilli adds extra appeal to this homely and delicious meal-in-a-dish created by Jo Wilcox.

50g butter
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
2 medium courgettes, cut into small dice
50g flour
350ml milk, heated
410g can whole kernel corn, drained, ½ cup liquid reserved
½ cup grated tasty cheddar
1 bag spinach, wilted (in microwave or by steaming)
1 sheet savoury short pastry
Crumble:
3 slices white toast bread
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
½ teaspoon finely chopped chilli
4-5 fresh sage leaves
2 tablespoons olive oil

Heat butter in a large saucepan and saute garlic and courgettes for 2-3 minutes. Add flour and cook 2 minutes. Gradually add hot milk and reserved corn liquid, stirring constantly until smooth. Simmer 10 minutes. Add cheese, spinach, corn and seasoning. Cool.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a 20cm cake tin with baking paper. Trim and patch pastry to fit. Add corn filling.

Crumble: Process bread, garlic, chilli and sage in a food processor. Add oil and pulse to combine. Sprinkle over pie. Bake 30 minutes or until crumble is golden. *Serves 6*



Tomato Tart with Parmesan Pastry

Cheesy pastry and juicy caramelised onions make Janet Dunn's pie special. A bonus is that it reheats beautifully.

Filling:
3 tablespoons olive oil
4 large onions, sliced
2 teaspoons sugar
4-6 large, ripe tomatoes, sliced
Sea salt, black pepper, chopped fresh thyme, extra olive oil
Parmesan pastry:
225g self-raising flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
35g butter, softened
35g freshly grated parmesan, plus 2 tablespoons extra
About 125ml milk

Filling: Heat oil in a heavy frying pan. Add onions and sugar and cook, covered, until soft and golden, 20-25 minutes.

Pastry: Preheat oven to 200°C. Sift flour with baking powder. Rub in butter and 35g parmesan. Mix to a soft dough with milk and roll out on a floured surface to fit a 24cm x 34cm greased shallow baking pan.

Sprinkle pastry with extra parmesan and spread with onion topping. Cover with tomato slices and sprinkle with salt, pepper, thyme and a little olive oil. Bake 30-35 minutes until pastry is well browned. Serve hot. *Serves 6*

Beef, Mushroom and Red Wine Pie

(pictured page 143)

Bought meat pies are no match for this hearty home-made version.

500g diced beef
2 tablespoons each: flour, olive oil
1 leek, diced
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
200g button mushrooms, quartered
1 cup each: beef stock, red wine
5 juniper berries
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
2½ sheets flaky puff pastry
1 egg, beaten

Toss beef with flour and brown in hot oil in a large pan. Stir in leek, potatoes and mushrooms. Add stock, wine, juniper berries and thyme. Simmer gently, uncovered, for 1 hour or until meat is tender. (Thicken with a little cornflour paste if gravy is too thin.) Cool.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a 26cm x 18cm pie dish with pastry. Add filling and cover with remaining pastry. Prick with a fork, brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake 30-40 minutes or until golden. *Serves 4-6* >

Thai Chicken Curry and Leek Tart with Sesame Pastry

Thai Chicken Curry and Leek Tart with Sesame Pastry

This tasty tart also works well made in individual small cases, or with flaky or filo pastry if you want to forgo making your own.

Filling:
2 tablespoons butter
2 boneless skinless chicken breasts, cubed
1 leek, finely sliced (save some green slices for garnish)
50g packet green curry paste
½ cup flour
400ml can coconut cream
½ cup chicken stock
Black or white sesame seeds for sprinkling
Sesame pastry:
2 cups flour
1 egg yolk
2 teaspoons sesame oil
¼ cup sesame seeds
Pinch of salt
About ¼ cup cold water

Filling: Heat butter in a large saucepan and saute chicken, leek and curry paste until the chicken changes colour. Stir in flour then add the coconut cream and chicken stock. Stir until boiling then simmer gently for 15 minutes. Cool.

Pastry: Preheat the oven to 190°C. Process flour, yolk, sesame oil, seeds and salt until crumbly. Add water a little at a time until mixture forms a dough. Chill 10 minutes.

Roll out pastry to line a 28cm tart tin. Pour in cooled filling and sprinkle with sesame seeds and green leek slices. Bake 40-45 minutes or until pastry is golden. Serve in wedges with salad. *Serves 6-8*

Bacon, Egg, Potato and Vine Tomato Pie

We've served this with a drizzle of reduced balsamic vinegar. Alternatively, add a dollop of your favourite chutney.

2 sheets ready-rolled puff pastry
2 medium potatoes, cubed
1 tablespoon oil
1 small onion, diced
6 rashers bacon, chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
6 eggs
1 cup cream
8 small vine tomatoes, halved
Balsamic syrup:
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
¼ cup water
2 tablespoons brown sugar

Trim pastry sheets to fit a greased 20cm springform tin, coming halfway up sides and pressing joins together firmly. Chill for 15 minutes.

Cook potatoes until just tender. Drain and refresh under cold water. Heat oil in a frying pan and saute onion, bacon and garlic until just coloured. Cool.

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Whisk together eggs and cream and season with salt and pepper. Stir in potato and bacon mixture and pour into pastry shell. Place tin on a baking tray and bake 20 minutes.

Arrange tomato halves on top of the pie, cut side up. Reduce heat to 160°C and cook for a further 20-30 minutes or until filling is set. Cool for 10 minutes then remove sides of tin and leave to cool completely. (Removing the sides will help keep the pastry crisp.)

Serve pie in wedges with a swirl of balsamic syrup. *Serves 8*

Balsamic syrup: Simmer vinegar, water and sugar for 5-8 minutes until reduced and syrupy. Cool. >

THREE BAKING TINS: PER MAGNUS PERSSON/GETTY IMAGES

Bacon, Egg, Potato
and Vine Tomato Pie

Maple Banana Nut Tart

This easy pie is a delectable combination of favourite flavours. Enjoy it warm with vanilla ice cream.

- 1 sheet frozen sweet short pastry
- 1 ripe banana, chopped
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ¼ cup cream
- 1 cup mixed chopped and whole nuts

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a 20cm fluted tart tin with the semi-thawed pastry and chill for 5 minutes. Bake 8 minutes or until just set and dry to the touch. Cool 5 minutes.

In a medium bowl, beat together banana, maple syrup, eggs, flour and cream. Stir in nuts. Pour into tart shell and bake 20-25 minutes or until golden and set. *Serves 8*

Rhubarb and Rosewater Macaroon Tarts

HAND MOULDING DOUGH: GETTY IMAGES

Rhubarb and Rosewater Macaroon Tarts

Serve these tarts warm with a dollop of spiced mascarpone – combine a quarter of a cup of mascarpone with a drizzle of maple syrup and a pinch each of ground cinnamon and nutmeg.

Pastry:
1 cup flour
2 tablespoons caster sugar
Pinch each: cardamom, salt
25g butter, softened
1 egg, lightly beaten
Filling:
450g chopped rhubarb
2 tablespoons water
2-3 tablespoons sugar
½ cup each: cream, sugar
2 cups thread coconut
½-1 teaspoon rosewater
1 egg white, beaten

Pastry: Place flour, sugar, cardamom and salt in a food processor and pulse to combine. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

Add egg and pulse until mixture just comes together. Turn out on to a lightly floured surface and gently knead to form a ball. Wrap and chill.

Filling: Simmer rhubarb with water and sugar until soft. Cool.

Bring cream and sugar to the boil, stirring until sugar has dissolved. Add coconut and rosewater and mix well. Allow to cool.

Preheat oven to 190°C. Divide pastry into 4 and roll out each piece between plastic wrap to prevent sticking. Line 4 small tart tins and chill 5 minutes then bake 10-12 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and brush with egg white (this seals the pastry).

Fill each tart with rhubarb and top with macaroon. Place tins on a baking tray and bake 20-25 minutes or until macaroon is golden and set. *Serves 4*

For a recipe for Lemon Tart with Hazlenut Crust, see nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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Bones to pick

Crusted lamb racks always look impressive yet they're remarkably quick and easy to cook

RECIPE & STYLING BERNADETTE HOGG / **PHOTOGRAPHS** KIERAN SCOTT

Cook's notes

- It is important to trim the racks. This can seem a bit wasteful but removing the sinew and fat will ensure the racks keep their shape and melt-in-the-mouth texture once cooked.
- The lamb racks should be at room temperature before cooking.
- To make fresh breadcrumbs, trim crusts from a loaf of slightly stale white bread – sourdough works well. If the bread is too fresh to make crumbs, lightly toast it in the oven. The bread can then be turned into crumbs using a hand grater or by pulsing in a food processor. Breadcrumbs will keep stored in an airtight container for several days or can be frozen.
- Experiment with the flavour and texture of the mustard used; there are many interesting mustards available through farmers' markets and specialist food stores that have flavours designed to complement meats such as lamb.
- You can also experiment with the flavours in the crust. Lemon zest can be substituted for orange. Try adding a tablespoon or two of basil pesto as a delicious alternative to fresh herbs.
- The rule of thumb is to allow four chops per person. If you want to make the servings more substantial without buying extra meat, simply increase the amount of breadcrumbs and add more oil to bind the mix.
- The cooking time of 20 minutes ensures a medium to rare rack. Cooking a further 5 minutes will bring the lamb to medium.
- It is important to let the racks stand once removed from the oven as they will continue to cook. Covering them with tinfoil helps keep in the heat.
- Have all the meal accompaniments ready, as the racks should be served immediately after standing.

Mustard & Herb Crusted Rack of Lamb

2 lamb racks (8 chops per rack)
2 tablespoons wholegrain mustard
½ cup fresh breadcrumbs
3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
½ orange, finely grated zest
2 tablespoons chopped rosemary
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
4 tablespoons olive oil
Flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a baking dish with baking paper. Trim any fat or sinew from racks. Spread mustard over the meaty part of the chops.

2 Place the breadcrumbs, garlic, orange zest, rosemary, parsley and olive oil in a bowl and stir to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

3 Lay racks down flat and press generous amounts of the herbed crumbs over the mustard, patting them on firmly.

4 Place racks interlocked together in the lined baking dish and bake 20 minutes. Take from oven and cover loosely with tinfoil. Allow to stand for 8 minutes then cut racks in half and serve immediately.
Serves 4

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References: 1. Holt S. *Research Review.* Available at http://www.researchreview.co.nz/NZ%20Inspire%20Report.pdf. Accessed 10 March 2009. **2.** Global Initiative for Asthma; *Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention.* Updated 2008. **3.** Bateman ED et al. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med.* 2004;170:836–844. **4.** Bateman ED et al. *Allergy.* 2008;63:932–938.

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Small bites

Entertaining editor Sally Butters selects good things to eat, try and buy

Liven up meats, salads and veges with **olive condiments** from Simunovich Estate south of Auckland. $8 per grinder; (09) 236 1020.

Writing icings are bright, delicious and wonderful for birthday cakes. $4.80 at selected supermarkets; see queen.com.au for the full range.

In season: chevre

It's spring, which means the white Saanen goats at Brabant Farm in the Thames Valley are back from maternity leave and in production, supplying their rich, sweet milk for Aroha Organic's award-winning cheeses. These lovingly crafted, firm gouda-style chevres have a mild nutty flavour and will convert the most serious goat cheese phobic. Order online at organicgoatcheese.co.nz (nationwide courier).

Palm tools by Chef'n fit snugly in your hand for ease of use. Peeler $13, brush $17 and zester $20 at cookware shops.

Try these delicate Hawke's Bay-made **savoury jellies**; they are superb with meat and cheese. $10 per 245g jar from gernotsgold.co.nz.

Australian-made Queen pretty pastel **sugar flowers** make cake decorating effortless. Around $5 a pack in supermarkets .

A long-time Dutch favourite, **Blooker cocoa** is good to sip and ideal for baking. $9 for 250g from most New World supermarkets.

Easy-Squeeze by Kuhn Rikon is one of the best garlic crushers on the market. $60; call Uncle Zitos for stores, (03) 546 9739.

Crocheted cakes are cute and calorie-free. From $20; made in Nelson by The Unconventional Cake Company, (03) 544 0972.

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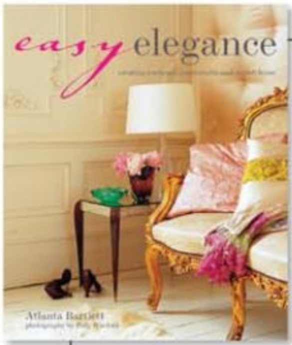
Bookcase

Kerry Engelbrecht goes browsing for the best reading



EASY ELEGANCE

Atlanta Bartlett
(publisher Ryland, Peters and Small, distributor Southern Publishers, 160 pages, $59.99, hardback)

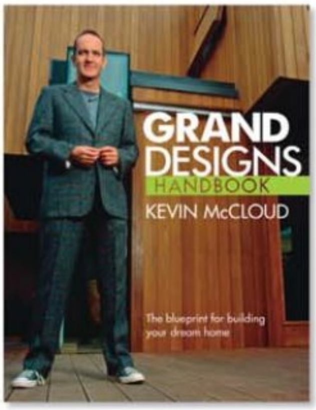
In these tight times, the idea of being able to create elegant interiors using pieces I already own appeals tremendously. And this is what *Easy Elegance* is all about. It's got nothing to do with strict design rules or rigorous style blueprints. Instead it's about bringing together loved pieces to create a home that suits your tastes and lifestyle and, most important, one that reflects your personality. Interior stylist and author Atlanta Bartlett starts out by defining the four main elements of the look – comfort, simplicity, function and individuality – before she guides readers through different looks to help pinpoint personal preferences. She then looks at every room in the house, demonstrating how to put it all into practice. The photographs are dreamy and the text both inspiring and fun to read. The ideas Bartlett presents are attractive and practical. If you want a glossy show home, don't buy this book. But if you dream of an inviting space that's a reflection of you and your lifestyle, you will be as smitten as I was.

Kerry Engelbrecht is NZ House & Garden's book editor

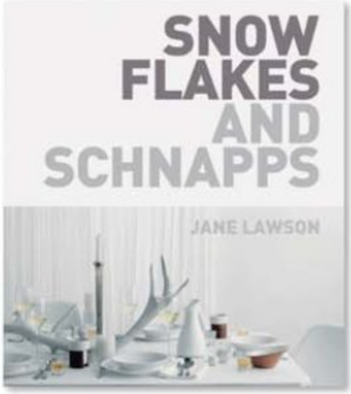
GRAND DESIGNS HANDBOOK

Kevin McCloud
(publisher and distributor HarperCollins, 288 pages, $39.99, paperback)

Thank goodness for optimists because only terrifically hopeful individuals ever decide to build tricky houses with way-out materials, no project manager and hardly any money. Even better, a saintly few allow my favourite pessimist, designer Kevin McCloud, to come and film them for his television show, *Grand Designs*. And so we get to see them engaging in this madness over the six months they have estimated the project will take to complete (stop laughing). The show, which McCloud writes and presents, is now in its ninth season in the United Kingdom and is just as popular here. Saturday nights wouldn't be the same without dishy Kevin wading about muddy building sites in gumboots, wearing his fur-lined jacket and pontificating (his word) on the wrongs and wrongs of hapless house builders. There's not a single episode in which Kevin hasn't deployed the phrase, "They'll never do it". Sometimes he's right but he loves to be proved wrong and, nine times out of 10, he delivers a lovely story of redemption to wrap up the show. His latest literary offering, *Grand Designs Handbook*, is about the "stormy early period" of the building process that starts long before the cameras roll: choosing an architect; finding a builder; buying the right plot; navigating the planning permission process and, crucially, hiring a project manager who'll do the job on time, on budget and hold your hand all the way. Pictorially we get to revisit many fabulous homes from past episodes and there's plenty to read too. Kevin's a lovely writer: opinionated, yes, but his vast experience translates into sound, practical advice. His passion for good design is the foundation of the book he calls "the blueprint for building your dream home".



Deb Bartlett is a NZ House & Garden sub-editor



SNOWFLAKES AND SCHNAPPS

Jane Lawson

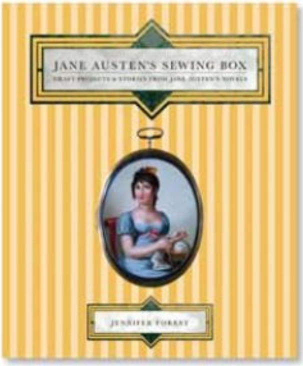
(publisher Murdoch Books, distributor Allen & Unwin, 290 pages, $80, hardback)

This large and very beautiful recipe book focuses on the hearty, luscious winter fare of Europe's snow-cloaked regions, particularly Germany, Austria, Russia, the Baltics, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Switzerland and Italy. So alluring is the food that one almost wishes winter wasn't all but over and there was good reason to make a gorgeous, rich goulash soup or a creamy venison stroganoff or to indulge in apple oliebollen (Dutch deep-fried fritters) with buttermilk nutmeg ice cream. Fortunately comfort food is never out of season, so this selection should have year-round appeal. Most of the dishes aren't overly complicated and don't contain too many hard-to-source ingredients. Many also have reasonably familiar names such as schnitzel, lasagne, strudel, blini and sacher torte. But, in a book of foreign dishes – written, one assumes, for southern-hemisphere cooks (the author is Australian) – it seems rather an oversight not to have included notes with each recipe, even if just to signal its origin or give the cook an idea of what to expect. A glossary would be handy too. Still, the photos are so evocative that it's almost possible to ignore these shortcomings.
Sally Butters is NZ House & Garden's entertaining editor

JANE AUSTEN'S SEWING BOX

Jennifer Forest

(publisher Murdoch Books, distributor Allen & Unwin, 224 pages, $39.99, paperback)



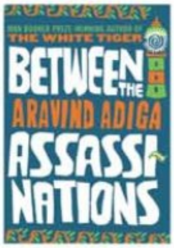
In this appealing book, Jennifer Forest has created a text that weaves 18 Regency-era craft projects with historical information and snippets of text from Jane Austen's novels. True to its name, you really do feel as if you're dipping into Austen's 18th century sewing box. The craft projects – which include paper flowers, pincushions, bonnets, knitted rugs and muslin caps – are all items that ladies of the day would have made on a regular basis and the beauty of the text is that each project is directly related to a particular Austen novel and the female characters within it. Each task is graded by difficulty and the author helpfully explains the historical context and significance of each item; a huswife, for instance, was a small fabric case with pockets that held sewing and needlework tools. Each page of text is exquisitely designed with photographs, backgrounds of Regency wallpapers, caricatures and oil paintings of historically relevant scenes. Easy-to-follow pencil line drawings and instructions accompany the text. Each project is seamlessly blended to portray historical craftwork in a modern way. Surely this text has something for everyone: who wouldn't want to be enriched by history, moved by quotes from Austen's novels and inspired to have a go?
Tracey Ellin is NZ House & Garden's art director >

Hot picks this month at Poppies stores

We Are All Made of Glue
by Marina Lewycka
Published by Penguin

From the author of *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* comes another hilarious, eccentric romp from this quirky narrator in which serious themes are given a comic perspective with glorious characterisation.

Between the Assassinations
by Aravind Adiga
Published by Penguin



The Booker prize winner brings to life a chorus of distinctive Indian voices in this collection of short stories. Set in the underbelly of urban India, it deals with the issues of poverty and injustice.

Sacred Hearts
by Sarah Dunant
Published by Hachette

From the author of *Birth of Venus* comes a new novel set entirely in an Italian convent in 1570 where an angry and rebellious novice threatens the stability of the convent.

The Angel's Game
by Carlos Ruiz Zafón
Published by Penguin

Following on from *Shadow of the Wind* is another wonderfully atmospheric gothic tale about obsession, both in literature and love. This dense work stays with the reader long after closing the final page.

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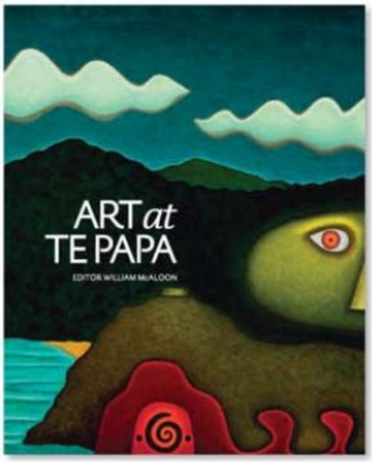
Titles reviewed in this month's *NZ House & Garden* book review section available at Poppies stores.



ART AT TE PAPA

Edited by William McAloon
(publisher Te Papa Press, 432 pages, $130, paperback)

This is the basic version of *Art at Te Papa*. There is also a cloth-bound, foiled, boxed and hand-numbered hardback edition of 300 available for $300 each. But the standard edition is fine by me. It measures 31cm by 25cm and has 400 full-colour plates of the key works held in our national art collection, from New Zealand historical and international masters to contemporary. Each has its story told in a brief essay by a Te Papa curator and there is a long and scholarly, but readable, overview written by editor William McAloon. Since Te Papa took over the collections of the National Art Gallery in 1998 it has been accused of both hiding and trivialising our treasures – remember when they displayed McCahon's *Northland Panels* alongside an old refrigerator? This book shines a light into the treasure trove. I'm savouring one page per day and greatly enjoying both the artworks and the written commentaries that run alongside.
Pam Neville is NZ House & Garden's collectables writer

THE PERFECT APRON

Robert Merrett
(publisher Cico Books, distributor Southern Publishers Group, 128 pages, $39.99, paperback)

To me it's always seemed the height of practicality to slip on an apron over my work clothes when I charge in at night to put a meal on the table. Who has time to get changed before launching into the familiar ritual of emptying the dishwasher, scrubbing the spuds and folding the laundry? Getting dinner sorted fast can quell all sorts of irritable eruptions, but I realised early in my life as a working mother that aproning up was not standard practice. I know of only one woman in my circle of friends who wears an apron (cheers, Margo). The rest look rather aghast at the sight – "Oh, how quaint. My mother used to wear one of those". But now, thanks to this book, I am officially on trend, ahead of the pack even, and the rest of you will be clamouring to get your own pinny pronto! Mine can make no similar claims to being "household haute couture" but I will be grateful to have some choice finally because this is now my next winter hobby. The book has 35 patterns ranging from flirty French maid to a full-length wraparound frock. I may not be up for that one – shades of *Coronation Street* cleaning lady rather than kitchen chic. The "hostess with the mostest" brocade number, however, would suit one of my seriously cool friends. In fact, once I've got up a head of steam, this book could take care of presents for the rest of the year. Apron or pinny? Call it retro and they'll all want one.

Barb Rogers is NZ Gardener's deputy editor

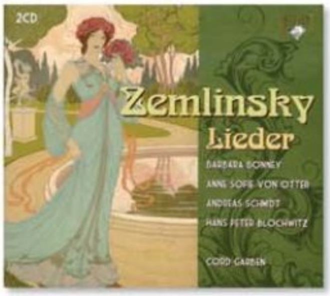
DIG: SEASONAL GARDENING

Meredith Kirton
(publisher Murdoch Books, distributor Allen & Unwin, 440 pages, $55, softcover)

It's no secret that I'm a visual person and I'd choose a gorgeous image over an enlightening story any day, despite being a writer myself. Australian gardening personality Meredith Kirton's new book *Dig* ticks all the right boxes when it comes to looking fabulous. But, when I finished drooling over the pictures, I found it to be a comprehensive how-to and when-to of gardening, packed with down-to-earth advice that covers everything from the practicalities of planting and growing to design information and ideas and even plant profiles. Written and photographed over a year, *Dig* includes plenty of first-hand observations and experience. Just like gardening itself, this innovative book is a perfect blend of art and science. The checklists for each season may be a little out of sync for New Zealand gardeners but everything else is right on the money. And, for our Australian readers, there's no question that this is one book that should be in your bookshelf, on your coffee table and in your garden shed.
Kerry Engelbrecht ■

Music

Kate Mead listens for the latest sounds



ZEMLINSKY LIEDER

Barbara Bonney, Anne Sofie von Otter, Hans Peter Blochwitz, Andreas Schmidt, Cord Garben
Brilliant Classics 9009

These are lieder, or songs, for solo voices, sung in German and accompanied by piano. Schubert and Schumann spring to mind but these fine examples are the work of Austrian Alexander Zemlinsky. Music for the human voice flowed naturally from Zemlinsky, who has been described as a late Romantic – if his songs were visual art they would be the liquid, gold-leaf-clad female beauties of Gustav Klimt. The early songs reflect the serene, lyrical language of Brahms but, as the years of the late 19th and early 20th centuries rolled on and composers dramatically broke from the traditions of the past, Zemlinsky extended the chromatic sound worlds of his close forebear, Richard Wagner, and his contemporary, Richard Strauss. Zemlinsky's songs have the depth and clarity of water in Klimt's masterful *Schloss Unterrach on the Attersee.*

REQUIEM

Conspirare
Harmonia Mundi HMU 807518

Sacred music inspired by spiritual life stirs up emotions from triumph and joy to contemplation and peace. As the title suggests, Conspirare's latest CD, *Requiem*, dwells largely on the latter range of feelings and thoughts. It's a moving, contemporary music study of death and the sorrow of loss, magnificently offset by unmitigated joy and thanks for the beauty of life – listen to the blossoming choral voices in Eric Whitacre's setting of EE Cummings' poem *Hope, Faith, Life, Love*. At the more traditional end of these works, requiems by Herbert Howells and Ildebrando Pizzetti swirl through the acoustic space, wrapping warm eternity around the frail human form – as comforting as encircling arms. The lyrics of Stephen Paulus' moving work ask, "Tell me, where is the road I can call my own, that I left, that I lost so long ago?"

Kate Mead is a production manager at Radio New Zealand Concert ■

NZ HOUSE & GARDEN on the web...

ONLINE PRIZES

Win one of eight **Thierry Mugler Angel Sunessence Eau de Toilette Légère**, valued at $126 each. Delicious, floral and sensual, the dazzlingly chic notes of Angel Sunessence Eau de Toilette Légère unite glamour and daylight. A summery fragrance, it's a new, distinctive scent that inspires emotion, as only the greatest perfumes can.

MORE RECIPES

At *NZ House & Garden* we love all kinds of pies and tarts. Try the Lemon Tart with Hazelnut Crust, an extra recipe from this issue's "best of" pies feature, to be found on our website.

EXTRA PHOTOS

To see more of this issue's Alsop house in Wellington, the Falconer house in Hamilton, the Bell home in Hastings and the Langholm garden, simply go to:

www.nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

shop window

The latest in shopping news from around the country

SLEEP IN STYLE

Get in to Thread Design's flagship store to see their entire range of bedlinen, cushions, quilts and throws. There's something to suit everyone, from babies to adults. Thread Design mixes textured fabrics and embroidered motifs with clever prints and colours, often inspired by New Zealand's natural environment. All their bedlinen is designed and made in New Zealand from 100 per cent cotton. They also have a variety of other products in the store, ranging from beds, bunks, baby clothes, lampshades and home fragrances.

274 Richmond Rd, Grey Lynn, Auckland, (09) 360 1361, threaddesign.co.nz

THE COMBINED TALENT GROUP

In a world of reproductions, The Combined Talent Group have established a unique point of difference with design, craftsmanship and paint effects. The recently opened commercial development of Bennetts of Mangawhai chocolate shop and cafe showcases the collective imaginations of Sally Holland, Paul Stables and Ross Lewis. A story about the restoration of Sally's Devonport home in the August 2009 issue of *NZ House & Garden* (pictured) highlights the home's bespoke furniture, kitchen design, manufacture and paint effects – all fine examples of what these artisans can achieve.

Call for an appointment: Sally 021 269 1238 or (09) 445 9600, stablesfurniture.co.nz

FOLDAWAY BEDS

Foldaway beds offer fantastic space-saving solutions for your apartment, guest room or beach house. Room Saver Beds produce New Zealand-made, comfortable, flexible slat beds that fold away into a vertical cabinet. Custom-designed side cabinets, shelves and home entertainment units can also be incorporated into the units in a range of finishes to suit your decor. The bed comes with a quality mattress supported by a strong metal frame. Each bed looks good, feels comfortable and disappears when it isn't needed.

For more information see roomsaverbeds.co.nz, (09) 818 4100.

To advertise in this feature contact elaine.millar@fairfaxmags.co.nz or phone (09) 909 6880.

Virtually there

Kim Rutter makes a cyber art of time-wasting

THE QUESTION I am most frequently asked is this: how do you find something to write about every month? Sometimes I have a theme, sometimes I am just browsing at random, but the funny thing is, the "finding" is simple. The hard part is to stop surfing long enough to choose a selection and actually write something down.

There is no denying that the internet is the greatest time-waster known to humankind. Be honest – how much productivity have you squandered checking online auctions, updating social networking pages and reading joke emails and forwarding them on? Let's draw a veil over that unpleasant thought and, with no further ado, here is this month's crop of time-sucking sites to try in your tea break. Some are useful, some are amusing, some are interesting. I hope you enjoy them.

Do you ever find that someone has sent you a file (video, music, document) and you can't open it because it's in the wrong format? Just upload the file to Zamzar (**tinyurl.com/y9tfce**) and it will convert it to the format of your choice for free.

Do you hanker to speak Spanish? Mi Vida Loca (**tinyurl.com/5k5jfg**) is a 22-episode interactive drama from the BBC that is one of the most imaginative educational applications I have seen on the internet.

Do you need to send a ransom note? The perfect ransom note writer is at **tinyurl.com/zw69a**. (Disclaimer: mention of this site is in no way an endorsement of kidnapping, blackmail or demanding money with menaces.)

Have you heard of **BookCrossing.com**? It is an international book-sharing movement that my daughter stumbled upon when she found a book at a bus stop. The idea is that members register books and then release them into the wild. When one is caught, the captor inputs the code number on the site, reads the book and then re-releases it. There is a list of currently released books and where to find them, so you can go hunting too. The feel is "book-group-meets-random-acts-of-kindness". I love this idea, but clearly some towns need more releases to hit critical mass. Grab a book you think someone will love and join up.

If you are short of something to read right now, however, let me recommend **ReadPrint.com**. ReadPrint is a free online library of thousands of what might be termed classic reads: Jane Austen, George Orwell, Oscar Wilde – you get the idea. And it's not only pointy-headed tomes either: Agatha Christie, PG Wodehouse and Arthur Conan Doyle are all here. There are plenty of period children's favourites too, such as *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Secret Garden* and *Alice in Wonderland*. And, if you're short of time as well as reading matter, dip into **onesentence.org** where people post their true stories, told in one sentence: "The first thing I noticed after my dog died was how much food was accumulating on the kitchen floor." "I made it all the way to Iroquois County before I finally burst into tears." Poignant.

As a final flurry of time-wasting and if genealogy is your thing but you really can't be bothered to find out who's who, **MyHeritage.com** is a great collaborative solution. It lets all the members of your extended family work on the same family tree online, with each person putting in what they know.

I also really enjoy Ikea's ingenious interactive advertisements for storage solutions (**tinyurl.com/6jf7dn**), especially the bit that turns your keyboard into a drum machine.

If you can't think of what to cook for dinner, **Tastespotting.com** is a repository of beautifully photographed recipes and **stilltasty.com** (the ultimate shelf-life guide) will tell you how long you can keep the leftovers.

Last, there are 1000 Awesome Things to consider at **1000AwesomeThings.com**. My personal favourite is #738: when you go out for lunch and come back to a way better parking spot. A metaphor for life really. ■

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urban eye

What's hot in cities around the country

AUCKLAND

SHELLEY BRIDGEMAN

1 PAUANESIA

This compact store is a treasure trove offering a seductive blend of Kiwiana and Pasifika objects. Jewellery, ceramics, home textiles, lampshades and decorative mirrors pay homage to our flora, fauna, geography and people. Locally handcrafted items deliver fresh interpretations of classic koru, pohutukawa, pukeko and tiki designs. Where else in the world would you find a scarlet ceramic wall tiki inspired by a Crown Lynn plaque? On my wish-list is the pair of white dishes: one shaped like the North Island, the other like the South.

35 High St, City, (09) 366 7282, pauanesia.co.nz

2 SMIGGLE

If I asked my six-year-old daughter whether she'd rather visit Smiggle, Newmarket, or Disneyland, California, I can't guarantee her response. Such is the cachet of this Australian chain of way-funky, not-too-expensive stationery among people like Katie. In other hands, pens, pencil cases, notebooks, exercise books and erasers are a tad boring, but here they're imbued with a coolness and relevance adults could never hope to understand. Best of all, an after-school shopping expedition takes a mere five minutes and costs just $3.80 for two rubbers. We love you, Smiggle shop.

Westfield Newmarket, 277 Broadway, (09) 520 0459; see smiggle.com.au for other New Zealand stores

3

3 ECC LIGHTING & FURNITURE

Happy 100th birthday to ECC! The company has been delivering cutting-edge lighting and furniture to a discerning clientele since 1909, yet there's nothing old-school about its product range. Offering the latest work of world-class designers such as Antonio Citterio, Marc Newson, Marcel Wanders and Philippe Starck, this two-level store is an inspiring place to visit. It's here you'll source Moooi's famous two-metre-high horse lamp and the lesser-known pig table – both in black polyester and both delightfully defying notions of conventional good taste.

39 Nugent St, Grafton, (09) 379 9680, ecc.co.nz

WELLINGTON

ANN PACKER

4

4 MA-MITE

How could we have missed this one? On weekends only, Waikanae resident Sue Wilkie's abundance of Kiwiana spills out on to the footpath from a dark brown double hut that was once part of a camping ground, just down the road from the famous Front Room Cafe. Sue reckons the Great Kiwi Bach culture is having a revival and she tries to stock all the accessories, from "old dunger" surfboards and water skis, now being snapped up for decoration, to 1960s sun loungers, deckchairs, duffle bags, formica tables, fondue sets, Crown Lynn cups, candlewick bedspreads, travel bags, tea cosies, tea towels and pinnies.

32 Tutere St, Waikanae Beach, (04) 293 4074

5

5 D ALEXANDER TEXTILES

Looking for interior inspiration or wanting to indulge in a special cushion to spice up a tired living room? This store's wonderfully old-fashioned walls are decked out with colour-coordinated bolts of cloth and hanging racks bulging with designer samples from Antarctic to Zoffany – a Mecca for fabric lovers. There's a selection of one-off cushions made up from remnants of the latest luscious fabrics – including must-have New Zealand patterns on hemp. And, for those in search of a bargain, rifle through the bin of discarded swatches and remnants – just the thing for a new Roman blind or your own home-made cushions.

90 Dixon St, (04) 385 0360, dalexandertextiles.co.nz

6 SIMPLY PARIS

You could have an authentically French breakfast (including croissants and oeufs cocottes), lunch (quiche, croque-monsieur) or dinner (escargot, duck pie), but some would argue that the best reason to visit this bustling Cuba Quarter cafe is the patisserie. That classic French combination of butter, cream and eggs can be enjoyed layered, rolled, plaited or stuffed with fresh fruit and laced with flavours as delicate as vanilla, lavender and rose. Simply Paris does delectable birthday cakes to order too. Best-kept secret? Late afternoon specials: just the thing to pop in your freezer... if there are any left.

181 Cuba St, Te Aro, (04) 801 5486, simplyparis.co.nz >

CHRISTCHURCH

LEE SUCKLING

7 ZEROES

A year after taking over the famous Coffee Culture spot at the bottom of Cashmere Hill, Zeroes have perfected the art of espresso making. They got off to a rocky start last spring – brand-loyal locals apparently boycotted the takeover of the old favourite. But Zeroes is now as busy as ever. The stark white walls have been toned down with mood lighting and the international magazine selection is second to none. Hearty fare such as roasted vegetable salads and wholegrain filled rolls and sandwiches line the food cabinets and the cheesecake selection is always enticing (you know you deserve one after that walk around the base of the hills). Grab a petit four for just $2.50 with your latte – always different, always delightful.

81 Cashmere Rd, Cashmere, (03) 337 1033

8 THE MOHAIR STORE

Feeling a little chilly? Trot down to The Mohair Store and cuddle up to their 100 per cent mohair and alpaca blankets, throws and scarves, all proudly New Zealand-made. The store offers a large assortment of furry luxuries by boutique manufacturers such as Windermere and Lothorian but the star is definitely snugly, smooth, fine-as-silk mohair. Don't let the location – on the industrial outskirts of the city – deter you. The Mohair Store is a candy shop of colours and textures, ideal for gifts or a little self-indulgence.

287 Selwyn St, Spreydon, (03) 943 1639, themohairstore.co.nz

9 THE CORNERSHOP BISTRO

Reminiscent of the traditional bistros of Europe, the Cornershop Bistro in Sumner is a model of simplicity with a romantic French accent. Offering delicious, uncomplicated everyday dining with Parisian flair, the beachside eatery draws diners from all over the city for brioche French toast in the morning, warm olives with lemon and herbs in the afternoon or coq au vin in the evening. The decor is uncluttered and attractive and the service staff know the menu well. Dine by candlelight and savour a rich mochaccino with a hint of gorgeous Belgian chocolate.

32 Nayland St, Sumner, (03) 326 6720, cornershopbistro.co.nz

QUEENSTOWN

PETA CAREY

10 SELETTI

Newly opened on Rees Street in Queenstown, this retail gem can boast of being the only exclusive Seletti store outside of Parma, Italy. Owner and distributor Anna Cooney admits needing more than a little gumption to open her "retail version of a distributor's warehouse" mid-recession. She could have stepped out of the renowned Italian family herself, such is her ebullience and enthusiasm for the products. From toilet paper to bicycles and their trademark quirky cream ceramics, the Seletti range is a winner – durable, practical but full of humour and beautifully designed. Go and browse; Italy has come to Queenstown.

16 Rees St, Queenstown, (03) 442 4133, seletti.co.nz

11 RARE EDITION DESIGNS

Until a year or so ago you could find Sarah Martin's fabrics only online or in selected stores. Now, on a back street of Arrowtown, she has her own studio. RED, or Rare Edition Designs, is all about original, limited editions of screenprinted fabric, designed and handcrafted by Sarah onsite. The upstairs showroom is a warm, sumptuous showcase of lampshades, wall hangings, cushions, handbags and fabric-bound journals. If you head up the stairs without looking into the screened-off workroom, however, you'll miss the most fascinating corner of all – where the inspiration and creations take shape.

Unit 13, The Royal Oak, Buckingham St, Arrowtown, (03) 442 0106, rareeditiondesigns.co.nz

12 THREE BAGS FULL

If you have young children and you live south of New Zealand's temperate zone, chances are you'll have heard of Three Bags Full's merino childrenswear. Owners Pip Souness and Tracey van Herel started the Queenstown-based online business in 2007 in response to a lack of fun, quality wool clothing for kids and they sold out in the first week. Since then, sales have more than doubled annually and a few retail stores have picked up the range too. Pip puts the company's success down to basics: quality, simplicity and fun. Not to mention the fact that kids love the designs and fabrics and mums love the prices.

threebagsfull.co.nz

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Nat

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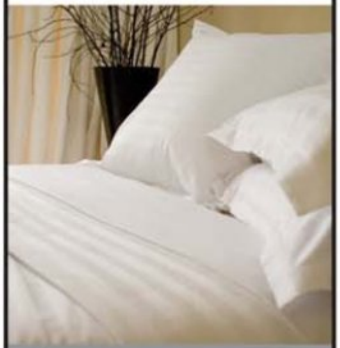

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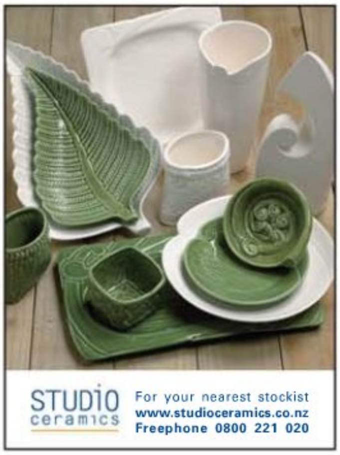

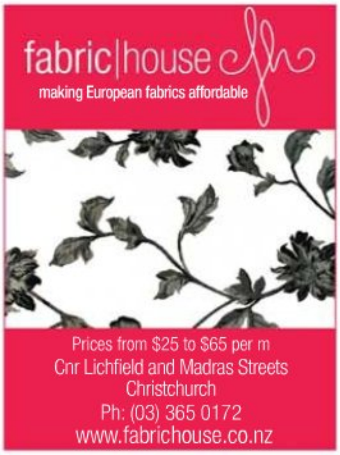

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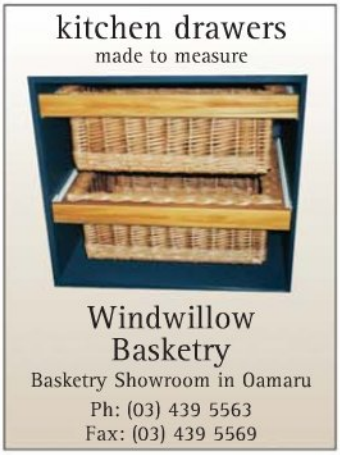

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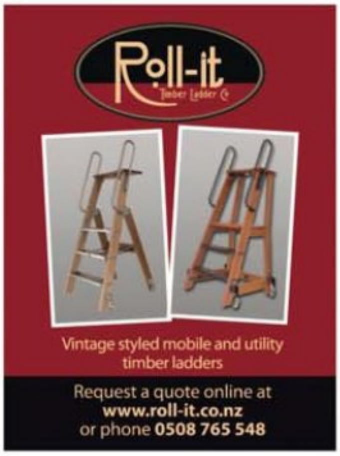

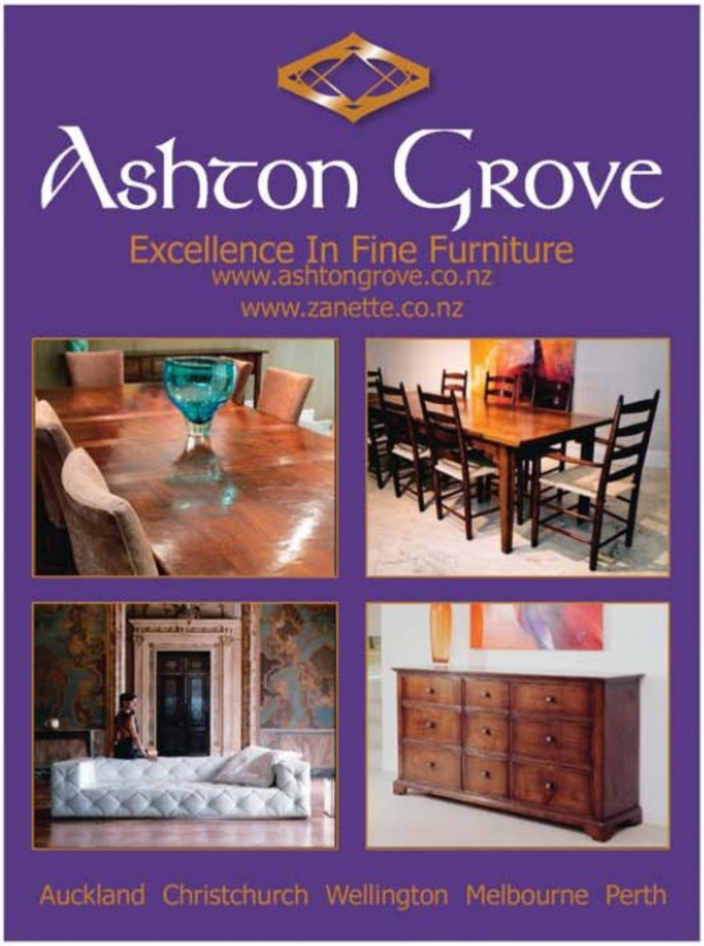

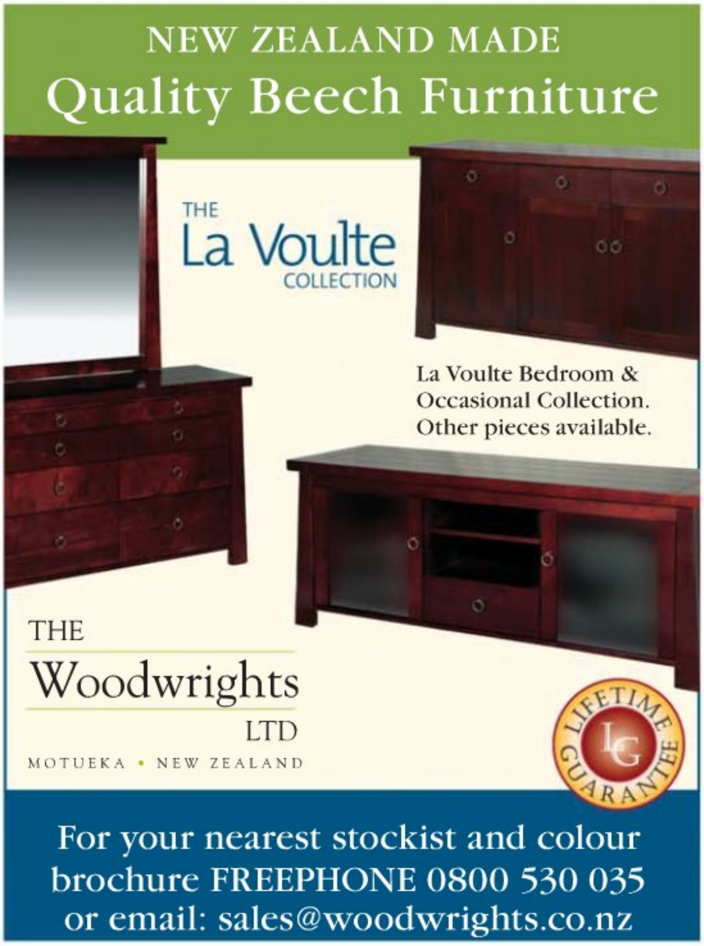

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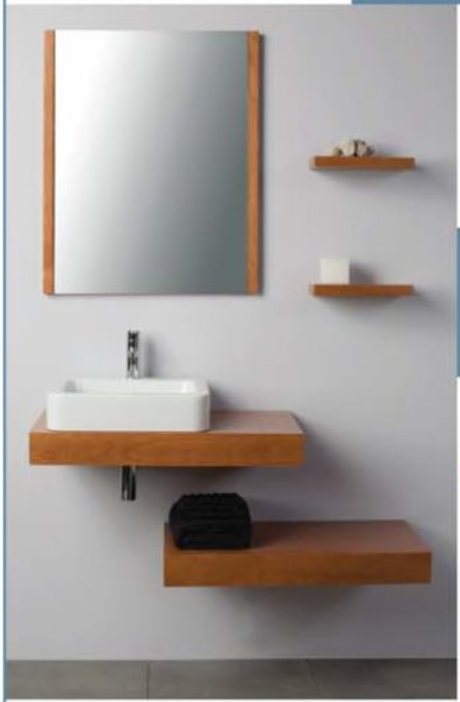

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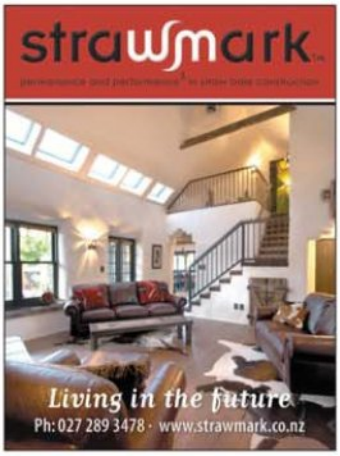

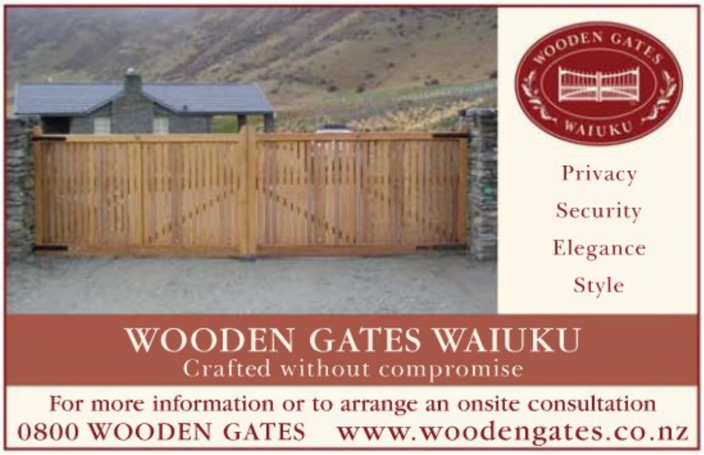

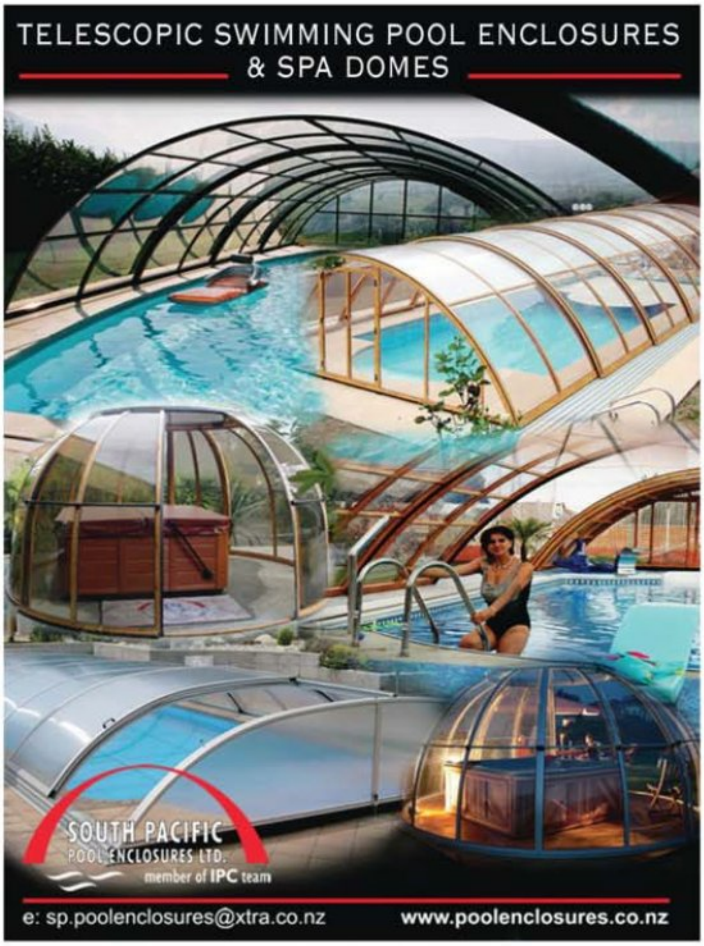

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L'Oréal Paris Men Expert

This Father's Day, treat Dad to the new Men Expert Hydra Sensitive skincare range. A complete regime of products designed to soothe, hydrate and protect sensitive skin. After all, men are worth it too! Available nationwide.

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Looking for the Heart Foundation Tick is a quick and easy way to shop for healthier choices within food categories. Find out more at pickthetick.org.nz.

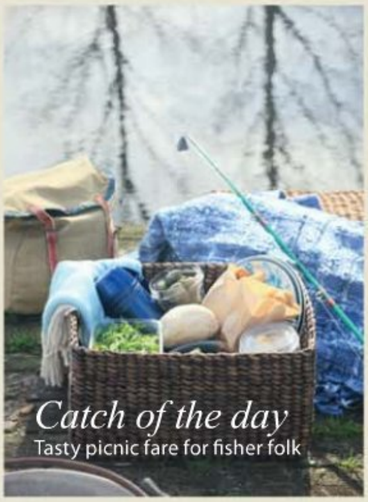
Linen House Supima®

Supima® is often referred to as "the cashmere of cottons". The Linen House Supima® towel range and Supima® sheet sets are available exclusively at selected Farmers stores. Please contact Linen House for a store list – 09 478 4999.

De Winkel Plum & Cinnamon

De Winkel is welcoming winter with a new seasonal limited-edition yoghurt, Plum & Cinnamon. Containing nothing artificial, just nature's best, it brings together tasty Hawke's Bay plums and fragrant cinnamon with De Winkel yoghurt. Available from selected supermarkets nationwide.

Next month in NZ HOUSE & GARDEN



Catch of the day
Tasty picnic fare for fisher folk

Spice it up
Simple, delicious ginger cake

Recycled with style
A Masterton artist has created an atmospheric home and studio from two old buildings

Queenstown's magic box
Simple structure, stunning location

On a grand scale
A Coatesville garden that has it all

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Neil McLachlan and his French bulldog, Thibault.

"I think this cushion would grace and transform the simplest of sofas." **Cushion** made from Brunschwig & Fils Fitzhugh Lampas fabric, available through interior designers.

"This plate is a nice twist on Chinoiserie." Wedgwood china **plate** designed by Jasper Conran $82.80 from Galtons, (09) 379 2371.

"I find this bowl strong and masculine." Orrefors black cut-crystal **bowl** $739 from Galtons, (09) 379 2371.

"A **cocktail cabinet** like this is memorable and very glamorous." Ralph Lauren Duke Bar $26,224 from Cavit & Co, (09) 358 3771.

"This Moorish-influenced occasional table adds intrigue to any setting." **Table** $3040 from Eterno, (09) 369 1173.

Fromental hand-painted and embroidered paper-backed **silk wallpaper** POA from interior designers.

"If only sparkling water could be dispensed in so fine a fashion today!" **Soda siphon** and silver-plated holder $550 from Dixon Antiques, (09) 520 2603.

Essence of...

Interior designer Neil McLachlan is a man of many talents

WORDS TRACEY STRANGE
PHOTOGRAPHS BELINDA MERRIE & JANE USSHER

FOR A MAN enamoured of the exotic, interior designer Neil McLachlan is very down to earth. He lives in a large house on a big hill on Waiheke Island in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf – about as far away from urban gilt and glamour as you can get. And he grows his own veges. But if ever he were to lose his cool it might be over a metre or two of Fromental bespoke wallpaper. "I would roll around on the ground and have conniptions to get it. It's one of the most beautiful products I've ever seen." Tailored to fit any wall, the paper-backed silk wallpaper is sourced through London-based Fromental and handcrafted by Chinese artisans. Neil is perhaps best known for his roles on television reality shows *Changing Rooms* and *Hot Property*. Alongside his design consultancy he co-directs Decortex e Famiglia, a Parnell-based trade showroom supplying world-renowned fabrics. But interior design isn't the only creative string to his bow; past jobs include designing costumes for Euro Disney and TVNZ, millinery, fashion design and tinkling the ivories at some of London's swankiest hotels. "I am a fan of blurring the creative lines," he says with a smile. ■

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